



The Bethesda Beacon

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

We know that all things
work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called
according to his purpose.

ROMANS 8:28, NRSV

In This Month's Beacon:

*Pastor Jim's Beacon Article

*Financial Update

*Member News

*Committee Updates

*Faith on the Go!

*VLM Announcements

*And More!

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, for the health & safety of all those in our congregation & community, in person worship services at Bethesda have been canceled for the months of July & August for sure. Our Church Council will be meeting August 18th to evaluate the situation going forward. We will keep everyone updated. Thank you.

Greetings in the Lord!

I trust that you are surviving our new life in 2020. It is certainly not a lifestyle any of us expected when the new year dawned. But one of the good things that has happened for me is that it has given me a chance to think. . .to meditate. . .to ponder various issues in life.

For instance, since we will soon celebrate Independence Day, I have been thinking about freedom. What does it mean to be free? Paul in Galatians 5:1 tells us, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free..." So, I ask, freedom from what? freedom for what?

Here is some of my thinking these days. Before I begin, I want to acknowledge that I may be wrong...or off somehow. But I write to challenge you to do your own thinking concerning "freedom." I challenge you to not take this great gift for granted. And remember that I was a Psychology/Sociology major oh so many years ago. That is the background from which I write. So here it is...

The freedom Jesus promises involves letting go of our small self, our cultural biases, and even our fear of loss and death. Freedom is letting go of wanting more and better things; it is letting go of our need to control and manipulate God and others. It is even letting go of our need to know and our need to be right..which we

only discover with maturity. We become ever more free as we let go of our three primary motivations in life: our need for power and control, our need for safety and security, and our need for affection and esteem.

I could write on and on, but I don't want to put you to sleep. I challenge you to do some thinking about freedom. The freedom we experience in this country is a gift that many in our world yearn for. Don't take it for granted. The freedom that Jesus offers is honest Truth....real Truth. I challenge you to strive for it. Immerse yourself in it. You will find Life...abundant Life!

May His peace and joy be yours!
Pastor Jim

Council Update

With the continued uncertainty surrounding the spreading of the COVID -19 virus we have decided against opening the church to in-person worship services through the months of July and August for sure.

Our concern is for the health and safety of all of our congregation and re-opening the church for worship to soon would put everyone at risk. We are looking into having a worship service in the park one Sunday in July if permitted. We will still need to do social distancing with the wearing of face masks for everyone's safety.

Anyone with health issues or those who do not feel comfortable being with a group of people we would encourage you to not attend. The council will meet again on August 18th and we will give you another update at that time.

Meetings of less than 10 people, practicing social distancing, can meet at the church if needed. Please let the office know ahead of time so it can be put on the church calendar.

Bethesda Staff

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Financial Secretary

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Synod's Site: www.nemnsynod.org

Due to the current circumstances Storytime is cancelled. As soon as we can begin to gather in the building again, it will resume. Stay safe during these difficult times.
God bless & take care! JoAnn

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.*

FYI - Church Parking Lot

Glenn & Emily Swanson from The Oldenburg house have requested the use of our parking lot for overflow parking for a few upcoming events in July & August as they have done in the past. They have events on Friday July 17th, Sunday afternoon July 19th, and Friday & Saturday August 7th, and 8th.

Call Committee Update

Over the last month, the call committee began preparations for the interview process. The committee identified questions that would promote discussion about how the candidate could meet Bethesda's needs

while also giving the candidate a good impression of the Bethesda community. The Synod office then coordinated a mock interview with an existing pastor in the region that allowed us to practice interview techniques through Zoom. Now that we have a little practice, we expect to begin receiving candidate profiles from the Synod office and hope to begin interviews soon.

Chris

Year-to-date ending 05/31/2020			
	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under) Budget
Envelope giving	41328.00	41909.00	(581.00)
Non-pledged income	6797.45	6058.35	739.10
TOTAL INCOME	48125.45	47967.35	158.10
Salaries/Compensation	27464.12	39027.45	(11563.33)
General Office Expenses	4015.25	3707.55	307.70
Utilities	5880.48	4325.40	1555.08
Other Expenses	964.11	1153.35	(189.24)
Benevolence Expenses	413.28	419.09	(5.81)
Evangelism Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Property Expenses	1233.26	612.50	620.76
Social Ministry	135.00	145.85	(10.85)
Stewardship Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Worship Expenses	2217.10	750.00	1467.10
CYFM Expenses	405.31	332.50	72.81
TOTAL EXPENSES	42727.91	50473.69	(7745.78)
Net Income	5397.54	(2506.34)	7903.88
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.			

Member News



Celebrating July Baptismal Birthdays:

Taylor Anderson, Stacy Colich, Doug Finke, Landon Hammitt,

John Stradtman, Tricia Hackensmith, Gracie Meagher, Andrea Kiehl, Chase Ableiter, Andrew Olesen, Keanna Simula, Pierce Davis, Jessica Krone, Kevin Frederick, Robert Postal, Patricia Nygren, Kevin Olesen, Charlie Wolter, Harold Ankrum, Johnny Moen, Amajja Halli, Chris Marciniak, Janelle Bell, Amy Olesen, Bryan Bunge, Carrie Buller, Julieauna Johnson, Mark Matlack & Attlei Sheldon.



Our deepest sympathy & prayers to Carol Chalberg & family. Frank Chalberg passed away on June 20th, 2020. God's promises of resurrection bring comfort and hope in Christ the risen savior.



Congratulations to the following students who participated in Confirmation on June 28th; Haley Ableiter, Alaina Kiehl, Noah Olsen & Joe Solomon.

During this time of Covid-19, the Mat Makers are continuing to meet on Tuesdays at 9am to create mats for people that are in need. Thank you Mat Makers for all of the good work that you are doing!

Worship

We will continue to send a weekly email with the links to view our worship services online. If you do not use email you can go to our Facebook page, YouTube at Bethesda YouTube Worship Videos, on our website under *About Us-Worship*, or listen to Pastor Scott Kiehn's radio broadcast from the Lutheran Church of Baker, Montana. Worship begins at 11 a.m. Central time (**This program can only be listened to live-it is not recorded**)

Radiobaker.com

“Word in Season,” “Christ in Our Home,” and “Our Daily Bread”

monthly devotional booklets are located outside the church office.

Please help yourself to one or all of them. If you would like one mailed to you or would like to stop by the church to pick one up, please contact the office to discuss a pick up time.

Faith on the Go

Working and Waiting:
Romans 8:12-25

Waiting is hard and as humans we tend to not like it at all. Children, with their fledgling concept of time, in particular have a difficult time of waiting. We

wonder, as did the Roman people Paul is writing to, why doesn't reconciliation as promised in Jesus Christ happen today, instead of waiting?

We don't know and neither did the Romans but Paul is giving us all encouragement about what it means to live your everyday life as a child of God grounded in the future hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What does this mean for how you work, play, and generally live your life to be waiting for God's glory to be revealed? What is our role in that revelation of God's work in the world? Paul acknowledges that it is difficult and not always clear, but to hold on to the promises of what we know to be true: that God redeems us all through Jesus, and that God has the power to transform the entire world. We just have to be patient and know that God is at work even when we don't see it.

Pray

Dear God, we thank you for all that you have given to us: our homes, our families, our work, our rest and our daily bread. Your Holy Spirit leads us out to share your good news of love and forgiveness with the world. May we live daily into the hope that you offer us. Amen.

Connect

Where do you see the hope of God in your life or in the world today?

Where does the hope of God's promises need to be revealed?

Bible

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43—Parables of Jesus

Day 1

Matthew 13:24-26

Jesus often compares the Kingdom of Heaven to seeds and plants. Why do you think that is? What do you think of in the Kingdom of Heaven?

Day 2

Matthew 13:27-30

Good and bad are often closely linked together. We often have to struggle with the bad to get to the good. What good things in your life do you struggle for?

Day 3

Matthew 13:36

The disciples often struggle with Jesus' stories. What do you struggle with in this story? What do you wish Jesus would explain to you?

Day 4

Matthew 13:37-39

Is Jesus' explanation a comfort to you? Does it make you uneasy?

Day 5

Matthew 13:40-43

What do you think are the "causes of sin?" What temptations in your life do you wish you could burn? What would change about your life if you got rid of them?

Bless

Through Jesus you are a child of God.

Northeast Minnesota Synod Reflections

New Things I Now Declare

"I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, not my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them." - Isaiah 42:8-9

As frightening as the COVID-19 virus is and as unsettling as the change it has brought; in addition, we are called in our baptismal promises to work for justice and peace - that need continues to address serious on-going justice issues. Not simply addressed but also changed. The words of the prophet Isaiah and Corrie Ten Boom have come to mind.

Over and over Isaiah tells us that the LORD continues to declare “*a new thing.*” I am not in any way, shape or form suggesting that the LORD has sent COVID-19 to any continent nor as an end time plague! However, I am heartened by some of the changes that have come about because of the new ways in which life has indeed changed. Yes, there are still frustrations at physical distancing and the extra thought and care needed to be taken before jumping in the car to go somewhere.

Change has come. That is what brought Corrie Ten Boom to mind.

In her autobiography, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie talks about how her sister Betsy would give thanks to God for the lice and fleas that infested their barracks in the WWII German Concentration Camp they were confined in. “Why would you be grateful to God for these awful pests?”, Corrie would ask her sister. Betsy’s calm response was because it kept the Nazi soldiers from coming into their quarters. Gratefulness and trust in God carried them through those very difficult days.

This all leads me to think about the “*new things*” for which I am grateful to God that I have seen creatively emerge from this “pestilence” of COVID-19. Forced slowdowns provide time to think and allow society to get off the hamster wheel of busyness that brings about false security and false idols. We know now who the real essential workers are - the many unsung heroes who do their jobs to keep us safe, healthy, fed. It isn’t the billionaire sports world folks or the movie stars. Nor is it finances. Are they ever really secure yet we place our trust in them? Concern for friends and family facing COVID-19 outbreaks or who are living in the midst of social unrest, friends and family or even ourselves participating in justice protests reveals the plethora of false idols in all of our lives. Our society cannot be healed of economic disparities or racial injustice issues until the truthful causes of those festering wounds have been revealed. I have hope that the LORD is indeed about to do a *new thing*. I see and hear it in our young people. I see it in colleagues who care for their people and carry the pain of the world on their shoulders.

The many creative ways in which congregations have “turned on a dime” have amazed me. Truly, it is the Holy Spirit providing the imagination needed to move out from the four walls to an on-line presence. I think back to the many council meetings I have sat through where month after month any new innovation or request for newer technology and equipment were tabled, over and over again. COVID-19 accomplished a new thing for our congregations in lightning speed vs. the old ways of talking until kingdom come with nothing getting done.

I have hope as I hear stories from our Interim Pastors and other congregational leaders of councils reclaiming their responsibility to also be a part of the spiritual leadership (not just the pastor’s or deacon’s job.) They are reaching out with phone calls and sending cards to all of their people. They are being blessed even as the recipients of that outreach are being blessed.

It has been exciting to have two congregations call pastors during this time utilizing technology, their constitutions and calling legal meetings to vote to extend the call via parking lot meetings while following CDC protocol. (*It can be done as long*

as voting members have access to ask questions of the chairperson.) Two more congregations have named Candidates of Choice and several others are seriously interviewing. They are using technology we did not have available to us had the pandemic hit several years ago. Another “new thing” to be grateful for!

I am grateful for the time to reconnect with family and friends, again utilizing technology and following the CDC guidelines and less time living/working out of my car. Time to enjoy nature.

All of this is to say, before everyone wants to rush back into their buildings, please take some time to meditate on the words of Isaiah. What are the *new things* God is declaring to us in this time and place? Are we taking what we’ve learned about the importance of community to make sure decisions are made that are not just based on personal preference or “my need” but for the good of the whole community? I am grateful for the Smart Teams in congregations who are putting together protocol that will provide a modicum of health safety for their people.

Have we given some thought to what worship within the four walls might be once the doors re-open? Until there is a safe vaccine available, there cannot be congregational singing nor should there be congregational responsive speaking/reading. Can you imagine not saying the Lord's Prayer out loud together? Can you imagine coming together without coffee time? Regardless of when or how we are able to gather again as a full community, the former things we remember cannot be *now* or in the future. It will not and cannot "return to the old normal." Nor can congregations ignore the need for continued on-line presence for worship, bible studies and outreach. COVID-19 has shown us we can still be the body of Christ! I am grateful for the amazing rostered ministers, SAMs and other congregational leaders who have stepped up to the plate to do their best to minister to their people while having to wrangle with new technology (or old technology that needs replacing), spotty internet services, reduced staff assistance along with all of the other responsibilities entrusted to them.

I trust and am hopeful that all of our congregation's council

leadership will follow through on their promises made to their called ministers: to pray for them, encourage them, to make sure they are taking care of themselves physically, emotionally and spiritually. The same is true for the sound/video technicians, worship team members and parish secretaries. We are in an "in-between" stage, a "yet but not yet" time that creates double work for all of them. I hope folks recognize that and share their gratefulness. Just because someone might not be physically leading worship in a filled sanctuary does not mean that they have not been working! The pandemic has brought a change/loss of rhythm schedules...and yet even here, is God perhaps trying to do a *new thing*, as we are released from the bondage of too tightly packed calendars? Now is a time for listening, gratefulness, trust in the LORD who declares new things so that we someday, we can and will proclaim verse 10 of Isaiah's 42nd chapter, "Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth!".

*-Deacon Brenda Tibbetts,
Assistant to the Bishop*



Your Camps are Open!

While we aren't able to welcome campers to our traditional summer programs, it isn't summer without people at camp.

Our facilities at both Camp Hiawatha and Camp Vermilion are available for family and small group rental opportunities! We already have some families taking advantage of this, and we would love the chance to welcome you to camp as well.

Interested in learning more about our sites? Visit

www.NorthwoodsRetreatsMN.com.

Wondering about our policies and procedures regarding Covid-19? [Email](#) us to request the document...and to check availability.

Hope to see you at camp soon!

Volunteers Needed

Without our annual Work Days this year, there are many projects around both camps that need to get done. We have easier tasks, like raking leaves and cleaning buildings, and more involved tasks like building decks or building benches for our fire rings...and everything in between.

If you are interested in spending time volunteering at camp, we would like to connect with you. You can come for one day, a few days, or perhaps even regularly throughout the summer. Contact us to hear about our projects and to schedule your day. Adults, youth, and families are welcome!

Camp Hiawatha - contact Richie by [email](#) or phone 218-410-7655
Camp Vermilion - contact Brett by [email](#) or phone 218-780-2696

The VLM Bluegrass Festival is happening!

While our Board of Directors made the decision to cancel our in person gathering at camp, we are still excited to gather virtually with you on July 25...and perhaps even throughout the week before. Watch for more details coming soon!

www.VLMcamps.org •
vlm@VLMcamps.org • 800-331-5148
• 218-666-5465

Camp Hiawatha, 36944 Camp
Hiawatha Road, Deer River, MN
Camp Vermilion, 2555 Vermilion
Camp Road, Cook, MN

July 2020



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 2pm Children, Youth, Family & Ed. Meeting 6pm Al-Anon Meeting	3	4 Independence Day 
5	6	7 9am Mat Making	8	9 1pm Jam Group 6pm Al-Anon Meeting	10	11
12	13	14 9am Mat Making	15 Beacon Deadline	16 6pm Al-Anon Meeting	17	18
19	20	21 9am Mat Making	22	23 1pm Jam Group 6pm Al-Anon Meeting	24	25
26	27	28 9am Mat Making	29	30 6pm Al-Anon Meeting	31	

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

Sunday Worship

9:00am

*All worship services have moved
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.*

