

CHIMES Newsletter

DECEMBER 2020 VOLUME 82, ISSUE 12

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JEN...

In my devotional reading of scripture, I pray and listen to God. I pray for God's word to me, asking for answers to my questions and seeking guidance. Recently I was meditating on Acts 17:22-28 which reads:

22 Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23 For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26 From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, 27 so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. 28 For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'

My first question was, "What are you saying to me in this passage, LORD?" The word I heard in my silence was that we are being faithful and doing good works for our neighbors in this time. That even though I/we feel like it is never enough, to please know that it is sufficient. My second question was, "What does my congregation need to hear in this passage?" In the stillness came the assuring word that God IS present. Let them know that even though so much has changed, I, the one who calls and claims them is unchanging. That I am indeed present in your homes and your hearts.

My siblings in Christ, join me in receiving and believing these words. I regard them as a gift for us to share, among us and around us. Join me in a pause to breathe. Join me in a pause to give thanks to God and to one another.

Amen, amen, amen.

Pastor Jen



UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 3

Dwelling in the Word 7:30 pm

DECEMBER 6-13

Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction
Welcome New Members

DECEMBER 8

Dwelling in the Word 6:30 pm

DECEMBER 14

Dwelling in the Word 2 pm

DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve Worship Times TBD

DECEMBER 25

Christmas Day – office closed

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OUR CHURCH

DWELLING IN THE WORD

We will continue to offer Dwelling in the Word Bible study groups via zoom. There will be three that you can choose from: Thursday, December 3rd with Chaplin Mark Teslik; Tuesday, December 8th with Chaplin Dan Pulsfus; or Monday, December 14th with Pr. Jen. All are welcome to attend! The Zoom information is below:

Time: Dec 3, 2020 07:30 PM Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99346910901?pwd=bWpRdy9ZbFEwTDZHRmZHNEZKVVlxQT09>

Meeting ID: 993 4691 0901

Passcode: 497094

Time: Dec 8, 2020 06:30 PM Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97546730077?pwd=WEZKYVgvdFFaZXVNTFdaNWFRaFVVZz09>

Meeting ID: 975 4673 0077

Passcode: 624310

Time: Dec 14, 2020 02:00 PM Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99320101294?pwd=UONkUXBITnJNeVVxWHpqQlNtclhXUT09>

Meeting ID: 993 2010 1294

Passcode: 587048

COVID-19 TASK FORCE WOSHIP UPDATE



The Covid-19 Task Force met on November 12th to discuss new Executive Order that Governor Evers put out urging people to stay home due the rising cases of Covid-19 in our community and the concerns about the capacity of our hospitals. We believe it is important to not offer indoor worship at this time. Wednesday night services will be postponed for now as well. What will be offered is the following:

- 9 am online worship from church - streamed on Youtube
- During this service we will also use the FM transmitter. This means you can park in the parking lot and listen to church on your radio. We will have an usher come out to hand out bulletins and communion cards and collect offerings. Pr. Jen will come out either during or after worship to greet you.

We would like to have members come in to read and we will need an usher to help hand things out for the people who choose to park outside. This could be one person. If you are comfortable doing so, please sign up to help. You can do so [here](#) or by contacting the office.

NO INTERNET, COMPUTER OR CHURCH?

Do you not have a computer or connection to the internet at home to be able to enjoy "online" church? And are you not able or comfortable coming to church in person? BLC has purchased tablets that we can bring to those that have not been able to be a part of church worship services during the pandemic. You will be paired with a "buddy" who will either bring you the tablet and leave it for you to watch or will stay and watch church with you. If you are interested in this, please call the church office: 608-742-8502. We are also looking for "buddies": people that would bring the tablet to those in need, watch it with them or drop it off, start it and pick it up later.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES



Our plans for our Christmas Eve Worship services are tentative right now since we are not meeting indoors for worship. We want everyone to stay safe and yet know how special it is to be in the sanctuary for Christmas. Worship will definitely be offered online. Please stay tuned. We will send updates on worship times in the weekly emails, post on our website and Facebook page, and make announcements at Sunday worship. If you do not have internet, you can call the church for updates. Thank you for your continued understanding and patience.

NEW MEMBERS



If you are interested or know of someone who is interested in becoming a member of BLC, please contact the church office for more information. Two new member receptions are scheduled for December 6th.

CALL COMMITTEE

It is exciting! The Call Committee has been hard at work with a vital member survey that should be ready soon after Thanksgiving. We are planning to have this survey available in an easy computer or electronic format as well as via mail to make sure we reach all members. The survey will allow for your individual or family's input on church life and ministry questions helping to guide us toward the pastor called for our congregation. Please watch for further upcoming details. Thanks, and stayed tuned for more updates!

The Call Committee's goal is to have good communication with congregation members of Bethlehem throughout the call process. We will strive for frequent communication to you via announcement updates, the Chimes, the church website, etc.

The pastoral call is not simply the committee's decision. We are reaching out to members of Bethlehem of all ages to help and guide us.

As a quick reminder, we are still in the 3-year renewal time with Pastor Jen. The renewal process came with the option of extending a call to Pastor Jen a candidate as well. This will also be a part of the call decision in the upcoming year.

Respectfully, *Jeff Melby*

GIFTS OF BETHLEHEM – A VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Gifts of Bethlehem event will consist of an online silent auction and a pre-recorded concert, which **members will now receive as a special gift from Bethlehem!** You can request either a DVD or flash drive by contacting the church office. They will be delivered to your home by another member of BLC. Proceeds from this event will help our church as well as other non-profit organizations in the community, such as River Haven Homeless Shelter and the local PACAP program.



For our auction: If you have a gift basket or item that you would like to donate to our church for the auction, please drop it off to the church office by **Dec. 4th**.

For our concert: We are looking for singers and musicians and members who would record a simple Christmas greeting!!! Members and non-members: please contact Tania Anderson if you are interested in participating: 608-697-5999 or tranderson1012@gmail.com. Because this is a pre-recorded event, we will be setting up appointments for each musician to record his or her song at the church (if possible). Once we have all of the songs and greetings recorded, we will compile everything into one video.

Confirmation and high school kids who would like to participate in a special video project for the event should contact Megan Jahoda meganjahoda@yahoo.com. Sunday school aged children should contact Pr. Jen.

Thank you in advance to everyone that participates in our annual Gifts of Bethlehem event!! We are grateful for the opportunity to stay connected in small ways during these unusual times, and BLC thanks you for your continued support.

ONLINE SILENT AUCTION PAGE

To access the online silent auction page, use this website address: <https://www.biddingowl.com/BLC>
Please share this with your friends and family.
Please note: we will NOT ship any items. They will need to be picked up at church.

Bidding starts Sunday, December 6th at 7 pm. The auction will be open for one week, closing on Sunday, December 13th at 7pm. For those of you who would like to participate that do not have access to a computer or the internet, you may contact the church office to set up an appointment to view the baskets and make a bid in-person.

QUILT DRAWING



Get your tickets for this beautiful 70"x74" quilt drawing. This quilt was handcrafted with love by: Christie Rhinehart, Joanne Hanson, and Denise Bandt of Starry Lane

Quilting. Tickets available at the church office during office hours. The quilt is on display at church. The winner will be announced at the end of the Gifts of Bethlehem Silent Auction.

QUILTERS

We shipped 56 quilts to help warm the bodies and hearts of people who need them. More than this the quilters had great participation using safe methods recommended for gatherings, but times are changing and we must be aware when we see such big numbers of the infection going up; so we are going to shut down for a couple of months and take another look in the future. Thank you Lord for the time we had together. I hope we all stay well and look forward to gathering together again soon.

The Quilters

FAITH STORY FROM TANIA ANDERSON

"I grew up going to an ELCA church in Cudahy, WI. I remember always feeling like I belonged there, like it was a second home. I was there often, playing hide and seek in the sanctuary and other areas of the building with my church friends while our parents had various meetings. It wasn't until a couple of years ago that I learned my dad was the president of the council during a difficult time for our church, which helps me understand where some of my desire to unify our BLC church family comes from.

However, my desire to unify people comes from a very personal place as well. My own family became divided when I was about 12 years old. My sister was going through a difficult time in her life and sought out help from the Jehovah's Witnesses. There was a lot of tension in our house at that time. I would come home to my parents and my sister sitting at our kitchen table with Bibles out, debating the various interpretations of the scripture. I didn't really understand the scriptures at the time; all I understood was that my entire family didn't agree with her decision, and suddenly she was no longer able to celebrate the holidays with us. Despite everything, I always believed that if that was what she believed to be true, then that should be a conversation between her and God. I didn't feel that our debate was helping, especially if it would hurt our relationships with each other.

I learned firsthand that we all have strong convictions about what our religion should be and what our relationships with God should look like, but I have come to understand the importance of acknowledging just how unique and different we are from one another. Our viewpoints can be completely different, our strong convictions can be inherently opposite, and yet we can still agree that we are all trying to live in a way that aligns with God's will. When we can acknowledge our differences and embrace each other as unique children of God, it becomes easier to understand why my sister's walk with God may look a little differently than mine...but she's still walking with God in the best way she knows how.

Today, my sister still belongs to the Jehovah's Witness organization. She has unfortunately struggled with debilitating depression, anxiety and other mental disorders that have left her unable to be completely independent. She still has very difficult days, and on those days, her faith and her relationships with her Jehovah's Witness friends help her to get through when we aren't able to. I may not agree with her choice, but I don't believe it's for me to understand. I can care for her and love her because she is my sister, and leave the rest up to God.

This is what I am most grateful for with my faith: I don't have to have everything figured out. I can live my life with my arms outstretched, caring for all people, being an example of God's love; and I can leave the judgements for Him."

Want to share your faith story or moment when you felt God present in your life? Contact Pastor Jen or the church office.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

LOGO FOR BETHLEHEM

You still have time to submit logo design ideas to the church office. Please see the November Chimes for more details. Logo designs must be submitted to the church office no later than **December 31st** for consideration. We will vote in January

BLC WEBSITE

Our website has a new look. It will change slightly in January after we vote on our church logo. Remember this is a great source of information. It has Sunday's worship video, the bulletin, the church calendar, updates on worship and event, forms for confirmation, PJ story time video, and much more.



www.bethlehemLCportage.org

NEW OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2021 offering envelopes have arrived and will be ready for pick up the first week of December. Please help us reduce our cost by picking them up from the church office if possible. Please note: new envelope numbers will be assigned this year. If you would like to forgo envelopes, but just be assigned a number, please contact the church office no later than November 30th.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Our financial status has been stable over the last months, but we still need the continued support of the congregation to continue in the ministries. Here are some highlights from this year:

Mortgage- In June we closed on the refinancing of the mortgage which included closing out our loan certificate program. The current mortgage is at 3.95% with a monthly payment of \$5613 down about \$300/mo. The decrease in payments combined with the no interest payments on the loan certificates saves us about \$800/mo. The loan maturity date remains the same as our last loan, September 15, 2043 (which makes this a 23-year loan).

We received donations from the loan certificate program and other sources to help reduce loan liability. Our current loan balance is \$999,415. Last year, at this time, our loan liability was \$1,115,329. This is a decrease in liability by about \$116,000.

PPP- When the Small Business Association announced the Payroll Protection Plan to help business with payroll during the pandemic, we applied and received \$20,169 from this program in April. Bethlehem received notice that this loan was forgiven by the SBA. The money financially helped BLC during the Spring and Summer months.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church












PROFIT AND LOSS COMPARISON

November 1-20, 2020

	TOTAL				
	NOV 1-20, 2020	NOV 1-20, 2019 (PY)	OCT 1-20, 2020 (PP)	JAN 1 - NOV 20, 2020 (YTD)	JAN 1 - NOV 20, 2019 (PY YTD)
Income					
Income	13,741.00	14,754.14	27,878.54	269,266.89	230,581.03
Other Income	250.00	5,554.80	890.00	10,582.68	38,099.28
Total Income	\$13,991.00	\$20,308.94	\$28,768.54	\$279,849.57	\$268,680.31
GROSS PROFIT	\$13,991.00	\$20,308.94	\$28,768.54	\$279,849.57	\$268,680.31
Expenses	\$14,022.48	\$13,100.36	\$14,941.51	\$213,862.94	\$239,832.95
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$ -31.48	\$7,208.58	\$13,827.03	\$65,986.63	\$28,847.36
Other Income	\$2,036.22	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$11,341.10	\$16,552.37
Other Expenses	\$1,861.52	\$1,029.74	\$0.00	\$10,776.24	\$15,906.69
NET OTHER INCOME	\$174.70	\$ -879.74	\$0.00	\$564.86	\$645.68
NET INCOME	\$143.22	\$6,328.84	\$13,827.03	\$66,551.49	\$29,493.04

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 6:00 pm Finance Committee	2 10:30 am Tai Chi 7:00 pm Confirmation Grades 6th - 8th Via Zoom	3 7:30 pm Dwelling in the Word w/ Chaplain Mark Teslik Dwelling in the WORD 	4 10:30 am Tai Chi	5
6 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction OPEN 9:00 am Worship Online & New Member Reception 	7 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Call Committee Mtg 	8 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction 6:30 pm Dwelling in the Word w/ Chaplain Dan Pulsfus Dwelling in the WORD 	9 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction 10:30 am Tai Chi 7:00 pm Confirmation Grades 6th - 8th Via Zoom	10 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction 	11 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction 10:30 am Tai Chi	12 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction 
13 Gifts of Bethlehem Online Auction ENDS 9:00 am Worship Online 	14 10:30 am Tai Chi 2:00 pm Dwelling in the Word w/ Pastor Jen 5:30 pm Call Committee Mtg 6:00 pm SREA meeting Dwelling in the WORD 	15	16 10:30 am Tai Chi 7:00 pm Confirmation Grades 6th - 8th Via Zoom	17 6:30 pm Council Meeting	18 Chimes Articles Due 10:30 am Tai Chi	19
20 9:00 am Worship Online	21 10:30 am Tai Chi	22	23 10:30 am Tai Chi 7:00 pm NO Confirmation	24 Christmas Eve Worship Times TBD 	25 Christmas - office closed 	26
27 9:00 am Worship Online	28 10:30 am Tai Chi	29	30 10:30 am Tai Chi 7:00 pm Confirmation Grades 6th - 8th Via Zoom	31		

