

CHIMES Newsletter

JULY 2020 VOLUME 82, ISSUE 7

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JEN...

As I write this it is our first day back in the office as BLC staff. Janice is in her office. Julie is in her office. I am in my office. We are all silently working on our own stuff, just like old times! And while I am a little sad that I do not have the constant companionship of our dogs, this is so much easier for the three of us to be staff together. It is good to be back.

On Father's Day we went to my mom and dad's house for the afternoon. My brother and nephew were there too, visiting from Arizona. Brenda and I had not seen my parents since December of last year, for Dad's birthday. I had the opportunity to see Steve and Kade when I was in Arizona for a learning conference in January, but it was last summer around this time when we were all able to be together. It was good to enjoy our time together. We gave each other big hugs, before Brenda and I drove home.

A few hours before we visited family, we had our first worship gathering since I cannot remember. An appropriate number of our church family who do not have internet access, two worship assistants, and I gathered with 6 feet between us by the front doors to share the Word, prayer, and Holy Communion. This was the first time those in attendance had the opportunity to worship with others in any form since March.

There is a theme to these three situations I share with you. The theme is togetherness. We are created in love, to live together. We are made in the image of the Triune God, who is the source and ultimate definition of relationship. We need relationship with God, one another, and creation to be who God has created us to be. In other words, without relationship, without togetherness we are a dim reflection of the One who calls and claims us as beloved.

In the previous couple of months, a small group within BLC has been brainstorming ideas for how we can be together as a church family. They have been creatively and compassionately thinking outside the box. I am grateful for their work and their wisdom. They have also taken the next step with their ideas and are implementing a few right now:

- The BLC Great Pumpkin Patch
- Chalk the Lot
- High School youth bonfire gathering
- A bratwurst picnic in early August

There are so many more things we can do together. The only things holding us back are ideas and implementation. Consider this an official call for ideas, plans, and people to carry it out! It is like the old song goes, "The more we get together the happier we'll be." Please, share your ideas with me, the church office, the council. Together we can do it.

In hope, Amen, amen, amen! Pastor Jen



UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 4

Independence Day

JULY 7

Finance Committee Mtg 6:00 pm

JULY 16

Council Meeting 6:30 pm

JULY 17

Chimes Articles Due to office

JULY 19-25

Pr Jen out of office

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ELCA

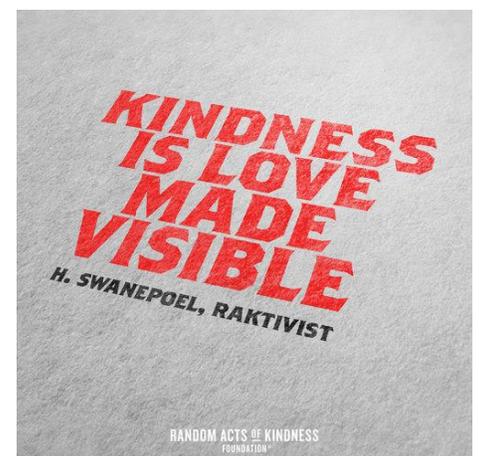
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OUR CHURCH

CONGREGATION SURVEY

As council and staff begin discussing our plans for returning to in-person worship, we want to get a sense of how you and the rest of the congregation are feeling. This survey is intended to get a better understanding of your personal comfort level with in-person worship at that time. We will also be looking for volunteers to help make in-person worship possible. Many "behind the scenes" tasks will be necessary to make in-person worship safe and meaningful for all.

If you are reading the electronic version of the CHIMES, you can fill out the survey here: [Returning to In-Person Worship Survey](#). If you are receiving this in the mail, you will be contacted by someone who will ask you the survey over the phone. Please contact Pastor Jen at BethlehemELCA.Pastor@gmail.com or (608) 485-3976 with any questions or concerns.

COVID-19 TASK FORCE

BLC is creating the Covid-19 Task Force and are looking for volunteers to be a part of it. The purpose of the Covid-19 Task Force is to guide initial preparations, develop policies and appropriate training (which may be adopted by a church council), and oversee the implementation of the adopted policies as long as COVID-19 remains a threat. The Task Force will also develop ideas to keep BLC members engaged and connected in a safe way following the policies created. They will evaluate physical gathering proposals from within the congregation. This ministry will be comprised of at least 5 people; including staff, a council liaison, and at-large members of the congregation. This ministry will receive proposals directly or have them forwarded to them for review. The persons on this task force shall be given the authority and responsibility to approve or deny any proposal they receive without recourse. All approved proposals will be sent to the Church Council as information items.

The Covid-19 Task Force will familiarize itself with guidance documents such as BLC's Return to the Church Building Plan, the Badger Bounce Back Plan, and other synod resources. The focuses of the Task Force will include:

- Preparing the building
Responsible planning will aim to ensure that all who come to worship gatherings are as safe as possible, with as few exposures to infection as possible.
- Preparing the assistants
Training of the Greeters and Ushers to help people feel welcome and safe. These worship assistants take on an even more important role as churches resume worship gatherings in a pandemic.
- Preparing the congregation
Develop a communication plan for announcing the resumption of worship gatherings and what to expect in them, along with any new developments and events.
- Preparing for future events
Develop a plan for how BLC will move forward if Covid-19 is still a threat as we address things such as: Sunday school, Confirmation classes, ministry groups, annual fundraising events, wedding requests, First Communion, Confirmation ceremony, fellowship events, funerals, etc.

If you are willing to serve on the Task Force, please contact the church office: 608-742-8502 or bethluch15@gmail.com. We would like to get this group going ASAP.

NEED HELP WITH PICKING UP YOUR GROCERIES?



We want to make sure we take care of our most vulnerable members, so staff and members continue to reach out to those members. If you are not able to get to the store and need help because you are at a high risk

with the Covid-19 virus, please reach out to Pastor Jen via call or email.

GARDENS OF BETHLEHEM

Spring is finally here – hopefully to stay – and the Prayer Garden and Church sign have been planted! We have a few extra plants to put in, but for the most part the planting for 2020 has been completed.



Now the task of watering, mulching and weeding begins throughout the summer. The mulching will probably take place early in June and it won't take as long this year because of last year's

large donation of mulch. However, we do need help in watering and weeding from now until fall. If you have a few spare minutes, and can help out doing either of these two tasks, please contact Dick Olson at 608-617-6409.

If you drive by the church you may notice, or may not notice, that our dear twisted Locust tree is no longer a part of the prayer garden. It has been slowly dying and was taken down on May 22, 2020. All that remains is a commemorative stump – just right for a potted plant.

VIDEO STREAMING EQUIPMENT

We are in the process of updating and improving the online worship service experience by investing in some better equipment. We have received some donations to help cover the cost of the needed equipment. If you would like to help contribute to this expense, it would be greatly appreciated. Please make sure you note that it is for the video equipment. Thank you!

LET'S STAY CONNECTED – SHARE YOUR FAITH STORY



During these times when we are not able to gather in person, it is easy to start to feel a disconnect from one another. To help us stay connected AND to help us get to know each other better, we are inviting you to share your faith story. What is a faith story? A faith story is your personal story about how you have grown in your faith and your connection to God. Many of us have had struggles along our journeys, which have led us to question our faith and yet have strengthened it.

How do you share your faith story? We are encouraging people to either write their faith story out and send it along with a photo of yourself to Julie in the office or to record a short video of you telling us about your faith story. These will be shared publicly on our website, Facebook page, weekly emails and in the Chimes (if it was written). If you have any questions, please email Julie Saalsaa at bethluch15@gmail.com.

LAWN MOWING HELP NEEDED

We are in need for more help with weekly mowing! Training on the lawn mower is available. Call Jack Paulson if you're able to help @ 608-577-4598.



PUMPKIN PATCH

During a renewal meeting, one of our members back in February suggested that we have a pumpkin patch and some sort of fall festival. With the current situation all activities were being cancelled, but we wanted to think of activities that the congregation can do together while we were apart. Starting a pumpkin patch was something doable. So far the area has been tilled and planted and we have pumpkins growing! People can individually work on maintaining the area and together we can harvest some pumpkins. With the

ever changing recommendations on social gatherings, we will be open to what we do with the pumpkins come harvest time.



We are looking specifically to Confirmation students and families, as this is your chance to earn some service hours! Sign up for a 2 week period of time that you will be responsible to weed and water the pumpkins (near the shed on the side of the church). There is hose at church that can be used to water the pumpkins, please make sure you return the hose neatly to the side of the church, so the lawn can be mowed. Thank you for participating. If you have any questions contact Melissa Bradbury 2meloh@gmail.com

BLC SUMMERTIME NO-CONTACT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY WIDE SCAVENGER HUNT: “BLC LOVES YOU”

Ten medium-sized rocks are being painted in bright colors with the words “BLC Loves You” and will be hidden in public places throughout Portage and Pardeeville. Clues for their locations will be distributed with the weekly news on July 3rd.

Rules to the scavenger hunt: When you find a rock, do not touch it or pick it up. Take a picture of yourself or one of your family members next to the rock and send it via text or email to Julie Saalsaa in the church office. The first five members to send pictures of all 10 of the “BLC Loves You” rocks will receive a \$25 gift card to a local business. All of the photos will be saved for the 2020 BLC quarantine photo album that we are creating. (only one gift card per family please).

“CHRISTMAS IN JULY”

Sometimes a little note or picture or small gift can go a long way when people are disconnected in times like these. Let’s stay connected and spread a little joy, one person at a time. If you are interested in participating, contact the church office by July 6th. Your name will be put into the drawing. Please include a sentence or two about yourself and what brings you joy, as well as your address and email to be shared with the person who receives your name.

On July 8th, names will randomly be drawn for each person that chooses to participate until everyone has been matched with someone. Until the end of July, you may send notes or small gifts to that person. If you choose, you can identify yourself or keep it a secret. The gifts can be simple: a note, a picture, something handmade, or whatever you would like to do. Just enough to let the person know that someone is thinking of them and they are loved.

CHALK THE LOT

In August, we will decorate the church parking lot with positive and inspiring chalk art! The idea is to let all who see it know that we are still church even though we cannot be together. For those that want to participate, you can sign up with the church office. You will be assigned a parking stall and a date and time when you can come. Please bring your own chalk and respect your reserved time slot. We want to ensure that social distancing is being followed. Watch for more details in the weekly emails and August Chimes.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE



Staff returned to the office effective June 22nd. Normal office hours: Monday – Wednesday 9am to 3pm. Thursday and Friday 9am to Noon.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Thank you to all who have mailed in your offerings. Your continued generosity is greatly appreciated! Below you will find a profit and loss statement capturing how we are doing now compared to this time last year. In June, the Mortgage refinance was completed, and our loan certificate program

was closed. Some of the loan certificates were donated back to the church. These donations are reflected in the increased income seen this month. We encourage your continued support as we continue to do the Lord's work during this difficult time.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

PROFIT AND LOSS COMPARISON

June 1-23, 2020

	TOTAL				
	JUN 1-23, 2020	JUN 1-23, 2019 (PY)	MAY 1-23, 2020 (PP)	JAN 1 - JUN 23, 2020 (YTD)	JAN 1 - JUN 23, 2019 (PY YTD)
Income					
Income	36,801.05	15,512.49	12,780.71	136,924.17	124,727.40
Other Income	590.00	825.40	295.00	7,092.68	14,562.30
Total Income	\$37,391.05	\$16,337.89	\$13,075.71	\$144,016.85	\$139,289.70
GROSS PROFIT	\$37,391.05	\$16,337.89	\$13,075.71	\$144,016.85	\$139,289.70
Expenses	\$10,709.21	\$10,063.92	\$18,725.34	\$121,611.33	\$132,295.02
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$26,681.84	\$6,273.97	\$-5,649.63	\$22,405.52	\$6,994.68
Other Income	\$1,200.00	\$514.00	\$313.39	\$6,011.00	\$13,165.56
Other Expenses	\$1,158.25	\$976.00	\$0.00	\$5,754.12	\$12,715.95
NET OTHER INCOME	\$41.75	\$-462.00	\$313.39	\$256.88	\$449.61
NET INCOME	\$26,723.59	\$5,811.97	\$-5,336.24	\$22,662.40	\$7,444.29

SUNDAY WORSHIP NOW ON YOUTUBE LIVE



We continue to broadcast Sunday service online on our YouTube channel. Here is a link to for that: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoSzJf_AoUrRGWpmtqNNeyg

Remember you can also find everything you need on our website as well: <https://bethlehemlcportage.org/>

UPDATING MEMBER INFORMATION

We continue to take this time to update our database and make sure all of our members' information is current and up to date. You should have either received an email or a form in the mail. Thank you to all of you who have replied. If you haven't done so yet, your reply would be greatly appreciated. Important to note: You will be able to mark information as "unlisted" if you do not want to share it with the congregation in a church directory. ONLY address, phone numbers and emails are printed in a directory, NOT any other personal information. That information is for church records only. Thank you for your help with this project.



JOB OPENINGS

PRaise TEAM LEADER (PTL): The Praise Team is made up of volunteer musicians and performs once a month during Sept to May. The PTL will be responsible for leading the whole team, instrumentalists and singers. Piano, keyboard, guitar, bass or other instrument experience preferred.

CHOIR DIRECTOR: The ideal candidate would be able to lead the choir, as well as play the organ for worship services, funerals and weddings, and possibly lead the Praise Band. Previous experience preferred to include the ability to motivate choir members, read music and conduct; knowledge of liturgical flow and connection to worship; piano experience strongly preferred. Part-time September through May.

Please contact the office for more a detailed job description. Resumes can be mailed to the BLC office.

