

# CHIMES Newsletter

JUNE 2020 VOLUME 82, ISSUE 6

## MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JEN...

Greetings to you in the name of Christ Jesus.

I was reading an article in The Atlantic magazine this morning. In it, the author used the term “patchwork” to describe the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. He wrote how the occurrences of the outbreak are not happening in sweeps or flows, but in pockets or patches. He also wrote about how this patchwork nature adds to the difficulty in predicting and suppressing outbreaks.

He then wrote about how our nation and its response and ability to address the pandemic is also a patchwork. Governors in each state have essentially been given the authority by the Federal government to discern what is best for their states. Likewise, states are given the responsibility for planning and implementing care for their residents. This is good, in that we have people who are knowledgeable about those for whom they care are making decisions. It is not a “one size fits all” solution to a multi-faceted problem. Where this fails, in my opinion, is in a lack of centralized coordination of care and resources. Where I see this failing in the greatest degree is in the distribution of services, though. What we see is that testing centers, hospitals and clinics, social resources are predominately located in areas that are populated by those people who have income, personal financial safety nets, access to internet, and other needs. The disparity is discouraging to me.

I reflect upon our denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in light of this patchwork term. One of the things that I value in our denomination is our strong leadership, from the Presiding Bishop’s office and in our synods. With this leadership comes resources and tools for the local churches to, using the tagline from our own synod, Care, Connect, and Equip the Body of Christ. As a denomination I do not sense a patchwork-ness so much, regarding who we are, as the term is used in the article I read. But then I look at our church, BLC.

In this time of being separated by space and together in the Holy Spirit our practices are done in the spirit and desire to care for the most vulnerable in our midst. We do not gather in person so that those who are most vulnerable are not at risk. So, we gather for worship Sunday morning via livestream on YouTube. We have the opportunity to share together in the Means of Grace; the Word shared and proclaimed, the sacraments, and our fellowship. Our team is not trained in the art of Internet production, but we do our best. No matter how well we pull off the rookie production, though, we are failing those for whom we are staying apart.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 2

Finance Committee Mtg 6:00 pm

JUNE 7

Holy Trinity Sunday

JUNE 18

Council Meeting 6:30 pm  
Chimes Articles Due to office

JUNE 21

Father’s Day



### JOB POSTING:

### CHOR DIRECTOR & PRAISE TEAM LEADER

BLC is seeking candidates to fill these positions. Please contact the office for a position description. Resumes can be mailed to the church office

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
W8267 Hwy 33 East  
Portage, WI 53901  
608-745-8502

Email: [bethluch15@gmail.com](mailto:bethluch15@gmail.com)  
[www.bethlehemLCportage.org](http://www.bethlehemLCportage.org)

The people within are church family who are most vulnerable are also the ones who may not have access to our livestream worship. I do not know what to do to change this. The disparity is discouraging to me.

Within this newsletter are opportunities to get involved with keeping connected, especially with the ones who cannot join in for worship. Please, join in. Even one connection makes the difference. In the Unity of the Holy Spirit,

Amen, amen, amen!

*Pastor Jen*

## OUR CHURCH

### RENEWAL TEAM UPDATE

With the current situation at hand, Renewal as we have planned has changed. Here is where we are and what is going on. Just because we cannot meet in person, the Holy Spirit binds us in loving community, no matter where we are.

- We are still focused upon Christian Education, Worship, and Fellowship/Outreach
  - Tania Anderson is working with our CE Superintendent, Jeannette Gessner to assemble and deliver “learning packs” to the homes of our elementary-aged families.
  - Melissa Bradbury is working with Pastor Jen on getting back into the sanctuary for our livestream worship.
  - Mark Teslik and Pastor Jen are putting their hearts and heads together for online Bible study.
  - We have set up a weekly Zoom fellowship at 10:00 on Sundays, following worship (Zoom link will be sent in the weekly email).
- The Renewal Team will be offering a time for discussion together during Fellowship around four questions.
  - What is the most important part of church to you?
  - How is God calling us to learn?
  - How is God calling us to be fed by the Word?
  - How is God calling us to share in Christ-centered relationship?

This time of change in how we are Church Together offers us the unique opportunity to realize what is truly vital in our life together. What we crave and miss the most point us to what are the foundational aspects of our church family.

In the Unity of the Triune God,  
Pastor Jen, on behalf of the BLC Renewal Team

### CONGRATULATIONS HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!

A big **Congratulations** to our high school seniors graduating from Portage and Pardeeville schools. We are very proud of you and wish you God’s blessings as your start on a new journey. Visit our Facebook page to see their pictures and bios. Our graduates include:

*Colton Brandsma  
Lacy Chappell  
Chloe Druckrey  
Gabrielle Garrigan  
Jake Jahoda*

*Lydia Jenatscheck  
Anna Kratz  
Jack Lauth  
Peyton Mueller  
Eve Schilling*



## CALLING TREE



The Local & Global Committee are making phone calls to reach out to members during this time of Covid-19 to help us stay connected. If you would like to join them, they are looking for members to make phone calls. Just let them know how many people you are able to call and they will give you a list. If you are interested, please contact Janice Petersen: [janice.j3@gmail.com](mailto:janice.j3@gmail.com)

## 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.

## BRINGING SUNDAY SCHOOL HOME

We truly miss seeing all of the families at church! Although it is important that we all stay home right now during the pandemic, we are developing creative ways to bring Sunday School to you. Starting in June, every child that has registered for BLC Sunday School will receive a monthly at-home learning pack full of summer activities and mini-Bible lessons. Some of the activities are interactive! Take pictures of your work and send them to the church office for our Facebook page and newsletter: [bethluch15@gmail.com](mailto:bethluch15@gmail.com). Parents, we encourage you to spend a little time with your children each week, if possible, doing an activity or lesson to keep them engaged in the current “church at home” environment. Because of the cancellation of this summer's VBS, we will be distributing two additional learning packs in July and August to keep the activities flowing throughout the summer. If you have any questions for us, just let us know. We look forward to seeing pictures of the kids doing their projects!

## Thank You

Thank you all so very much for your calls, prayers, food, quilt, gifts, cards, visits and tears for a man who cared for you all. Bob enjoyed giving and doing, as he fixed a chair, made brats, coffee, fixed doors and the mailbox (making them mouse free) or his passion, mowing the lawn.

Your very Generous Memorials of over \$2600 have been given to the Bethlehem Mortgage principal.

*Family of Bob Rehdantz*

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

Thank you to all of you who have mailed in your offerings or have signed up to contribute electronically. Your generosity is greatly appreciated! If you choose to mail in your offering envelope, we ask that you do mail it and not drop it off since the office will be closed. Here is the church address: W8267 Hwy 33 E, Portage, WI 53901. Staff will be picking up mail daily. If you are able and would like to adopt a bill, please contact the church office by sending an email to [bethluch15@gmail.com](mailto:bethluch15@gmail.com).

Below you will find a profit and loss statement capturing how we are doing now with the COVID-19 crisis compared to this time last year. For the first three weeks of May, our giving has fallen behind last year's pace. Additionally, we are reporting the closing cost of the mortgage refinance this month, which is lowering our overall net loss for the 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

May 1-22, 2020

	TOTAL				
	MAY 1-22, 2020	MAY 1-22, 2019 (PY)	APR 1-22, 2020 (PP)	JAN 1 - MAY 22, 2020 (YTD)	JAN 1 - MAY 22, 2019 (PY YTD)
Income					
Income	9,895.71	15,154.00	19,907.60	93,812.76	104,507.04
Other Income	95.00	513.71	1,400.00	6,267.68	13,576.90
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$9,990.71</b>	<b>\$15,667.71</b>	<b>\$21,307.60</b>	<b>\$100,080.44</b>	<b>\$118,083.94</b>
GROSS PROFIT	\$9,990.71	\$15,667.71	\$21,307.60	\$100,080.44	\$118,083.94
Expenses	\$23,615.34	\$9,352.85	\$10,760.75	\$109,065.05	\$115,883.31
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$ -13,624.63	\$6,314.86	\$10,546.85	\$ -8,984.61	\$2,200.63
Other Income	\$313.39	\$255.00	\$0.00	\$4,811.00	\$12,451.56
Other Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,595.87	\$11,739.95
NET OTHER INCOME	\$313.39	\$255.00	\$0.00	\$215.13	\$711.61
NET INCOME	\$ -13,311.24	\$6,569.86	\$10,546.85	\$ -8,769.48	\$2,912.24

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

Office staff continues to work from home until we reach Phase One as described in the Badger Bounce Back. However, staff are checking mail on a daily basis. We want to ensure you that if you mail in anything to the church it will not sit in the mailbox. Julie and Janice are reachable via email ([bethluch15@gmail.com](mailto:bethluch15@gmail.com)). And Pastor Jen is reachable via email ([bethlehemELCA.pastor@gmail.com](mailto:bethlehemELCA.pastor@gmail.com)) and phone (608-485-3976).

The weekly news emails will continue to be sent to keep you update to date on what is going on. Our church website is also being kept current with news, information, and the weekly bulletin. Pastor Jen is active on our Facebook page with psalm readings and posts, and this is where you will find our Sunday worship. If you are not receiving emails from the church and want to be on the mailing list, please email the church office.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP NOW ON YOUTUBE LIVE



Because we have had several members have difficulty accessing our Sunday worship on Facebook, we will be making a switch to YouTube Live starting Sunday, May 22nd. The benefits to YouTube Live:

1. This will make it easier for everyone to open. It's as easy as clicking on a link. Here is a link to our YouTube Page:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoSzJf\\_AoUrRGWpmtqNNeyg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoSzJf_AoUrRGWpmtqNNeyg)

2. It will also be easy to share the link with others.

3. We can broadcast the YouTube video right on our website. You can find it right on our homepage. <https://bethlehemlcpottage.org/>
4. You will still be able to use the chat feature

Please note, we will continue to post the link on our Facebook Page. Please don't hesitate to contact Julie Saalsaa ([bethluth15@gmail.com](mailto:bethluth15@gmail.com)) if you have any questions or difficulties.

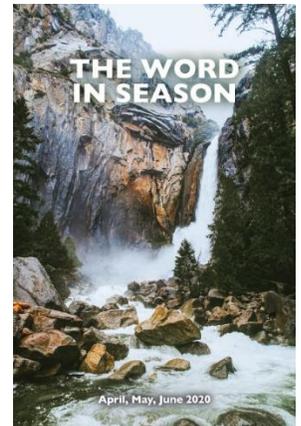
## UPDATING MEMBER INFORMATION



We continue to take this time to update our database and make sure all of our members' information is current and up to date. Members will be receiving an email from the church office, if we have your email, asking you to review your information. If you could take the time to look things over and let us know if there are any changes, that would be greatly appreciated. Members that do not have an email on file received a printed form in last month's Chimes. If you have changes you can either mail those back to the church or you can call and leave a message on the voicemail. 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.

## THE WORD IN SEASON DEVOTIONAL

We still receive The Word in Season daily devotional books. The devotional reflects on the themes of Sunday's texts with relevant meditations throughout the week. They have been put in the black mailbox near the office door so you can pick up your copy. There are both regular print and large print versions available. The Spring months, as well as the Summer months copies are here. Please make sure you pick up both!



## NEWS FROM THE SYNOD

### NOMINEES FOR BISHOP

The process for electing a bishop for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin in 2020 was established by the Synod Council, as called for in the synod's constitution. It began with Town Hall meetings in January and February, resulting in a profile of the synod and of the bishop we seek. Nomination caucuses were then held in each conference, beginning with ecclesiastical ballots by all participants. The process then shifted to the Bishop Call Committee, which was charged with the responsibility of presenting to the synod for election four to six nominees.

To see the full report of the Call Committee, detailing the process they followed to arrive at their decisions, you can visit this website: <https://scsw-elca.org/2020bishopelection/nominees/>. The website also contains a video introduction from each of the nominees and written material each has submitted. The nominees are listed below alphabetically by last name.

Forums will be held prior to the assembly at which an election will be held. Because of the pandemic, the date for that assembly has yet to be set

