

CHIMES Newsletter

MARCH 2021 VOLUME 83, ISSUE 3

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JEN...

I've heard it said that the only silly question is the one that is not asked. I've also heard that if you ask a silly question then you get a silly answer. So which is it? A question little that kids ask each other is, "How old are you?" If a little kid were to ask the same question of an adult then they may be told that isn't a question you ask. So which is it? The answer to this question is "yes". We learn as we mature and grow that it's not so much the question itself, but the time and circumstance of the question. It's not always what we ask, but where and to whom we are asking the question.

Another consideration is motivation. Why is a question being asked? Is it to learn something? Is it to help in decision making? Is it curiosity? Is it to entrap someone? Is it to help someone recognize or realize something about themselves?

Jesus asked questions. "Who do you say that I am?" "Why have you forsaken me?" "Where is your husband?" "Where is the child?" Why do you persecute me?" "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" So many questions...

I've come to learn that it's not just asking a question that is important but asking the right question. Sometimes it is appropriate to ask a question requiring a yes or no answer. Other times it is better to ask an open-ended question that allows for more thought and elaboration in the answer. It depends upon the situation, audience, and motivation. In parish ministry the questions I ask can set the tone for a situation. For instance, in evaluating a program or ministry I could ask, "How do you think that went?" Or I could ask, "What is one thing that you learned about God during this time?" Think about that for a bit and imagine some answers. Do you notice the types of answers that come from each question? Which question is more appropriate for the situation? It matters. Questions matter.

So often in our congregations we ask questions with an inward focus. "How can we raise more money?" "Who is going to organize the event?" "How can we bring in more members?" This is natural. This is how we've learned to function as people and congregations. One thing about the nature of questions we ask that we accustomed to asking is that the answers tend to be limited in their results. We think of a way or two to raise money. We find an event planner. We plan an event and advertise to the public. But what if we asked the questions a little differently? What if instead of making us the focus of the question, we made God the focus? This is called Asking God Questions. Some examples of God Questions are:

- What might God be up to?
 - What might God be saying to us?
 - What does God care about in our local community?
 - How might God be leading our congregation to join in something God is already doing?
-



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 2

Finance Committee 6:00 pm

MARCH 4

Dwelling in the Word 7:15 pm

MARCH 8

Dwelling in the Word 2 pm

MARCH 11

Dwelling in the Word 7:15 pm

MARCH 15-19

Julie Saalsaa out of office

MARCH 16

Quilters meeting again weekly 9 am

MARCH 18

Council Meeting 6:00 pm
Dwelling in the Word 7:30 pm

MARCH 24

Easter flower orders due

MARCH 25

Dwelling in the Word 7:15 pm

MARCH 28

Palm Sunday & First Communion 9 am
Worship

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ELCA

W8267 Hwy 33 East
Portage, WI 53901
608-742-8502

Email: bethluch15@gmail.com
www.bethlehemLCportage.org

What do you notice when God is the focus of the question? What happens to the nature of our answers when God is the focus? How could God Questions help us understand more about how God is calling us? What happens to the energy level in the congregation when we ask questions about God and God's activity?

Amen, amen, amen.

Pastor Jen

OUR CHURCH

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Dwelling in the Word will continue to be offered on the second Tuesday of each month at 2 pm, as well as weekly on Thursdays during Lent. You can use the same Zoom link each month. All are welcome to attend! No bible knowledge needed. The Zoom information is below, as well as on our website:



Monday, March 8, 2021 2:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92865189344?pwd=VVRycDdRcGZReHBTNk9QMctvRmVvdz09>

Meeting ID: 928 6518 9344

Passcode: 427889

THURSDAYS – WEEKLY (note time change for March 18th)

March 4, 11 & 25 at 7:15 PM; March 18 at 7:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96070727800?pwd=NWxTSkjh1htZVJkemNCZTNuUi9Hdz09>

Meeting ID: 960 7072 7800

Passcode: 225024

WORSHIP UPDATE

With new Covid-19 cases declining, we will be **increasing our capacity limits for worship to 40 people starting Sunday, March 7th**. Reservations will still be required, as well as all the prior safety precautions. You can make a reservation by signing up on our website: www.bethlehemlcportage.org or calling the office 742-8502.



LENT & EASTER PLANS

We are planning to have two worship services on Easter Sunday to keep the capacity to manageable numbers and keep people safe. Those services will be at 8:30 am and 10:30 am. Worship will also be livestreamed at 8:30 am. Reservations and masks will be required. The Confirmation families will be hosting a grab & go continental bag breakfast on Easter Morning raising funds for bible camp scholarships.

The week before Palm Sunday, our palms will arrive. If you plan to worship from home, you may come and pick up your palms from the office. Watch for more details as it gets closer as to when they'll be ready for pick up.



Date	Event	Worship Times
3/28	Palm Sunday	9am In person & Online If worshipping online, you can pick up your palms at church
3/31	No Worship	
4/1	Maunday Thursday	5:30 pm In person & Online
4/2	Good Friday	1 pm Worship In person & Online
4/4	Easter Sunday	8:30 am In person & Online 10:30 am In person Continental Breakfast Bags to Go

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS



Love. Grow. Serve.

We have a lot of open spots for worship volunteers in March and April, especially for Holy Week. We need ushers and readers. Also, if you are interested in learning how to run the audio/visual equipment for live streaming, please contact the office. Please sign up! You can do so by calling the office or on our website: www.bethlehemlcpportage.org. Thank you to all of the volunteers that have been helping throughout 2020 and into 2021!!

EASTER FLOWER ORDERS

We will be ordering flowers this year for Easter Sunday worship. I think we all need some cheering up and flowers always seem to do the trick! An order form is attached as the last page of this newsletter. Printed copies of the order forms can also found in the narthex at church. **Orders are due no later than Wednesday, March 24th.**



COUNCIL UPDATE



At the annual meeting we did not have any nominees for the open council seat so that position was not filled at the time. After the meeting, Kerry Melby stepped up to be considered. The Council met on February 18 and approved Kerry to join the Council. With a change in council members, position have also changed. Below please find a new listing of the BLC Church Council:

- Ann Ciske, President
- Geoff Gilbert, Vice President
- Halley Harms, Secretary, Christian Education
- Kory Anderson, Worship & Music
- Jack Paulson, Property
- Don Bender, Finance
- Ruth Price, Stewardship
- Kerry Melby, Local & Global

UPDATE FROM THE QUILTERS

The Quilters would like to give a big thanks to two women whose names were missing from the Quilters list in the



annual report. Angie Buchholtz has been instrumental behind the scenes with cutting quilt squares for over 1,000 quilts! We would also like to give a warm thank you to Cheryl Hebel for filling in for Cloe and helping with the sewing. Thank you ladies!

The Quilters will be back meeting weekly at church starting March 16th at 9 am.

NO INTERNET, COMPUTER FOR 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.



PRAYER LIST



Do you have someone you like to have added to the prayer list that we print in the bulletin? If so, just let Pr. Jen, Janice Petersen, or the office know.

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the Annual Meeting held on February 7th, Chairperson Bonnie Dixon reported on the work and progress our committee has made since late 2020. Her

summary stated that a Ministry Site Profile was created from the congregational survey process, finalized, and has since been submitted to the council and the Synod.

Regarding the survey, Bonnie spoke about the process, the many factors included, and the results that led to the committee decision from the congregation's input that we would be seeking a new pastor this year. Bonnie also made it known at the meeting that Pastor Jen has done wonderful work as a renewal pastor for the past two and half years and we have greatly appreciated her efforts especially during the disruptions in life the pandemic continues to put forth. Pastor Jen's renewal efforts for our congregation continue until July of this year and we are grateful for her service.

Since the Annual Meeting, the Call Committee has met again virtually with the Synod Bishop to discuss next steps in the call process. Bishop Joy has approved the Ministry Site Profile and is beginning the search for potential candidates. Meanwhile, the Call Committee is currently creating interview questions for candidates again based on finding a future match for the Bethlehem congregation. Future updates will report on timelines for interviews and progress in the pastoral call.

Respectfully, Jeff Melby

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 we determine a profile for our church life and find the optimum fit for a pastor we will call.

The committee members are Bonnie Dixon-Chairperson, Jeff Melby, Melissa Bradbury, John Denhartigh, Kathryn Crawford, and Tina Thomas. Council Member Jack Paulson is the liaison between the committee and Church Council. February 23, 2021

FAITH FORMATION

CONFIRMATION DURING LENT



Just a reminder, during Lent, there will be no Wednesday night confirmation classes. Students should use the Lenten calendar for the remainder of Lent through Holy Week. The calendar will be emailed out

and can also be found on the [Faith Formation page](#) on our website. Activities do not need to be completed in order. Students and families can choose when to complete them. Please email youthfamblc@gmail.com photos of any activities you complete so we can share with the congregation!

Classes will resume April 7th with an in-person option. There will be an activity offered in March most likely on a weekend- stay tuned for this.

5TH GRADERS



First Communion classes will be starting March 3rd. Classes will be held via Zoom on Wednesday nights at 6 pm. Letters will be going out to the 5th grade families who had been in Sunday School last year. If you have a 5th grader who is interested in first communion, please contact Jeff Melby 697-8347. First Communion is scheduled for Palm Sunday, March 28th at 9am.

PJ TIME VIDEO STORY READERS NEEDED

We have had several church members volunteer to read a bible



story from the Sparks Story bible for our PJ Time videos for the Sunday School children. These videos are then shared on our website and YouTube channel. **We are in need of story tellers.** If you want to see what it is all about you can view them here:

<https://www.bethlehelcportage.org/faith-formation.html>

We have a list of specific stories that need to be read. You can pick up a Sparks Story bible from church and record it at home, or you come into church and Julie will record it for you. All ages are welcome to read. If you are interested, please contact the church office. Thank you!

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

PHONE SITTING

I will be out of the office from March 15th – 19th and am looking for someone to volunteer their time to cover the church office phones during these times:

- Thursday, March 18th from 9 am to noon
- Friday, March 19th from 9 am to noon

If you're interested, please let me know. The help is greatly appreciated! Thank you so much,
Julie Saalsaa



BLC LOGO UPDATE

It was a close vote again (31 to 26)! The logo with the most votes is the following one. Thank you all for participating!



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Below is this month's financial report. Thanks for your continued support of the ministries of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Profit and Loss Comparison

February 1-22, 2021

	TOTAL				
	FEB 1-22, 2021	FEB 1-22, 2020 (PY)	JAN 1-22, 2021 (PP)	JAN 1 - FEB 22, 2021 (YTD)	JAN 1 - FEB 22, 2020 (PY YTD)
Income	\$15,296.00	\$15,026.03	\$16,035.34	\$33,688.43	\$34,855.70
GROSS PROFIT	\$15,296.00	\$15,026.03	\$16,035.34	\$33,688.43	\$34,855.70
Expenses	\$12,646.13	\$14,082.98	\$10,676.17	\$33,206.84	\$40,001.18
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$2,649.87	\$933.05	\$5,359.17	\$481.59	\$-5,145.48
Other Income	\$1,850.00	\$22.61	\$2,100.00	\$3,950.00	\$1,372.61
Other Expenses	\$1,724.25	\$0.00	\$2,031.25	\$3,755.50	\$1,326.75
NET OTHER INCOME	\$125.75	\$22.61	\$68.75	\$194.50	\$45.86
NET INCOME	\$2,775.62	\$955.66	\$5,427.92	\$676.09	\$-5,099.62

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Call Committee Mtg	2 6:00 pm Finance Committee	3 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Worship Online & In person	4 7:15 pm Dwelling in the Word w/ Chaplin Mark Dwelling in the WORD 	5 10:30 am Tai Chi	6
7 9:00 am Worship Online & In Person	8 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	9 Dwelling in the WORD 	10 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Worship Online & In person	11 7:15 pm Dwelling in the Word w/ Chaplin Mark Dwelling in the WORD 	12 10:30 am Tai Chi	13
14 9:00 am Worship Online & In Person	15 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Call Committee Mtg	16 9:00 am Quilters	17 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Worship Online & In person	18 6:00 pm Council Meeting 7:30 pm Dwelling in the Word w/ Chaplin Mark Dwelling in the WORD 	19 Chimes Articles Due 10:30 am Tai Chi	20
21 9:00 am Worship Online & In Person	22 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Call Committee Mtg	23 9:00 am Quilters	24 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Worship Online & In person EASTER FLOWER ORDERS DUE	25 7:15 pm Dwelling in the Word w/ Chaplin Mark Dwelling in the WORD 	26 10:30 am Tai Chi	27
28 Palm Sunday 9:00 am Worship Online & In Person - First Communion 	29 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Call Committee Mtg	30 9:00 am Quilters	31 10:30 am Tai Chi			



Easter Flowers

We will celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ with a garden of flowers to brighten our worship space.

You may choose between Easter Lilies, Tulips, and Hyacinths. The cost of each plant is \$15.00.

All orders must be received in the church office by **Wednesday, March 24th.**

Completed forms and payment can be dropped off in the church office mailbox.

The flowers may not be taken until after the 10:30 am Easter Worship Service.

Lilies _____ x \$15 = _____

Hyacinths _____ x \$15 = _____

Tulips _____ x \$15 = _____



in Honor of _____

in Memory of _____

given by _____

Please be sure to indicate which type of plant you are ordering and how many

Total amount enclosed (\$15 per plant) \$ _____

