

CHIMES Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2020 VOLUME 82, ISSUE 9

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JEN...

Greetings!

In the time of our shared ministry we have re-embraced our identity as “God’s Family Serving Christ with Love” to one degree or another. I’m hoping to use this space for us to look at our shared identity and see what God is saying to us in this. The plan is to focus on one aspect of this identity in the next three editions of The Chimes. My continuing hope is that we can somehow enter into a shared discernment regarding how each of these three aspects are reflected in our life together as a church family.

Of course, I realize how this sharing is hindered by our current situation in the pandemic. All the same, I have faith in our ability in the Holy Spirit to come up with a way (or ways) that we can share. I’m sensing that this is some important stuff we should be doing. Thank you.

“God’s Family Serving Christ with Love”

God’s Family:

I think the starting point of this discussion is for each of us to share how we define or think of what it means to be “God’s Family.” Some questions that come to me are:

- Who does this include?
- How are we made a part of God’s Family?
- What is the foundation or glue of this relationship?
- How is this relationship made known to us?
- How do others see us as a family? Do others even see us as a family?
- Do we welcome others into this family? How? Why? Why not?
- How does being part of God’s family define who we are?

You may have other questions to add. If so, please share them with me so that I can share them with everyone.

Now that we have a starting point, I invite you to ponder these questions. Pray about it. Listen to God. Share within your family, however that is defined. Then, and this an important part, share your revelations with me. Email, phone call, letter, a visit, text message; it doesn’t matter how you share, but that you DO share.

Again, I realize that the safety protocols of the pandemic have completely changed the way we experience BLC as a family. Even so, we are still a family and part of the Body of Christ. Your responses will actually help us to live as family during these challenging times. In other words, I need you. I need your help so that we can be who God is calling us to be, even during a pandemic.

Amen, amen, AMEN!

Pastor Jen



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 1

Finance Committee Mtg 6:00 pm

SEPTEMBER 7

Labor Day – Office Closed

SEPTEMBER 8

Quilters – 9am
Bible Study – 11 am
Covid-19 Task Force Mtg – 6:30 pm

SEPTEMBER 13

Congregational Meeting during 10 am worship

Bob Rehdantz Memorial Drive-thru Brat Fry 11 am to 1pm

SEPTEMBER 16

Faith Formation Starts

SEPTEMBER 17

Council Meeting – 6:30 pm

SEPTEMBER 18

Chimes Articles Due to office

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ELCA

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

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



- The FM transmitter drive-in service is up and running. This will allow for people to come to church and feel safe in their cars. We will be switching the outdoor services to the drive-in services. No reservation is needed. Members are asked to bring their own communion elements. Our parking lot will allow for 60 vehicles to be parked in every other space. We will have 2 ushers and a reader for worship volunteers. Communion cards and single-use bulletins will be handed out from a basket with a pole extender. Drive in services are on Sundays at 10 am and Wednesdays at 5:30 pm.
- Some of the most recent activities include the creation of:
 - Communication Plan for Covid-19 Contact Tracing Notice
 - Building Use Agreement (for groups wishing to use the Fellowship Hall)
 - Fellowship Hall Use Cleaning Checklist
- Rev. Kerri Parker, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) met with us as our guest speaker on July 28th. She shared some background information on the Covid-19 situation in Wisconsin, how the WCC supports Wisconsin churches and their most recent recommendations. WCC recommends churches make decisions using these questions:
 - Is it possible? But what is possible isn't always prudent.
 - Is it prudent?
 - Is it pastoral?
- We feel it's important to focus on a shared mission to make sure people feel they have meaning and purpose during this time. We are trying to keep our members safe, while also trying to maintain some sort of connection to one another during this difficult time.



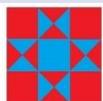
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Sleep in Heavenly Peace:** help build beds for those in need. Sept 26. Sign up to help [here](#) or call 844.432.2337 x 5520.
- **Pen Pals:** write letters to the residents at Our House Assisted Care and Senior Living Apt: 2876 Village Rd, Portage, WI 53901
- **Gardens of Bethlehem:** help water flower gardens at church. Contact Dick Olson at 608-617-6409
- **BLC Pumpkin Patch:** help water the pumpkin patch. This is a great opportunity for Confirmation students and families to earn some service hours! You can sign up [here](#). Questions, contact Melissa Bradbury 2meloh@gmail.com

CRAFT FAIR CANCELLED

The annual craft fair has been cancelled this year due to Covid-19. In its place will be a quilt raffle and online basket auction. Watch the Chimes and weekly newsletter for future details.

QUILTERS



Starting September 8th at 9 am, the quilting group can start meeting again.

We will practice good health by wearing face masks and giving space to keep us all healthy. We are looking for donations of fabric and sheets. Please join us.

The Quilters

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will start up again on September 8th at 11 am. We will meet outside if the weather permits.

FAITH STORY...FROM PASTOR JEN

I'm sharing a snapshot of my faith story with you. My hope, as I share how God has been working in my life, that you may be uplifted. If you are moved to do so, please share yours, too.

My Mom and I had a rough relationship, especially as I entered my teens and early adulthood. Hindsight shows me that much of this conflict lies in the reality that we are so similar. But, in my youth I refused to see this. The last thing I wanted to be was like my Mom. Or so I thought.

My parents moved to a new community following their retirement. They landed in Lena, Illinois where they quickly found a community of faith in Good Shepherd ELCA. Good Shepherd had a tradition in their Women's group to hold an annual Mother-Daughter event. Since Mom was new, I suspect, she was asked to give the greeting to the daughters. This led to her asking me if I would come and give the greeting to the mothers. One does not say no to my Mom.

The evening of the event Mom and I stood together at the pulpit. Neither of us knew what the other was going to say in our greetings. Mom went first. The only thing I remember her saying is that it has taken her 30 years to like her daughter. Bear in mind that I had recently turned 30. I don't remember her words beyond that, but I do know that I was in tears of gratitude, love, reconciliation, faith, and hope. When she finished, we embraced

one another in a way that was closer than we ever had.

Then it was my turn. As it turns out, what I had to share flowed directly into her greeting. I based my greeting upon a scene I had witnessed that morning while working in Madison. I worked in a business on Park Street. That day a mother duck decided she had to lead her ducklings across four lanes of traffic so that she and her babies could be in Monona Bay. I watched as she led them, imagining she was doing what she had to do, no matter the dangers. She led them, I thought, in faith, using the tools that God had given her as a mother, knowing that she was doing the best she could. They made it safely across, by the way.

What I realized that day was that no matter what I had previously thought about my Mom, was that she had and continues to live her life in faith, doing the best she can with the gifts she has.

I don't blame her, nor am I upset that she didn't like me until that evening. I didn't feel much of a liking for her until then, either. In that evening, in that sharing of our faith within our greetings, our relationship was resurrected into something new. Today, twenty years later, we continue to grow in our friendship, grounded in the faith we share.

BOB REHDANTZ MEMORIAL DRIVE-THRU BRAT-FRY

On Sunday, September 13th we will be having a drive-thru brat-fry in memory and honor of Bob Rehdantz from 11 am to 1 pm, after the 10am service. We are looking for volunteers to help out. If you are able to help please contact the church office or sign up [here](#).

BLC SUMMERTIME NO-CONTACT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Chalk the Lot had to be rescheduled due to rain on the original dates. We had 3 members/families participate on the new dates. Here are some pictures. You can see the rest on our Facebook page.



CALL COMMITTEE & SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

All voting members should have received a letter in the mail the week of August 25th explaining where we are in the Renewal process and the Call Committee. Reminder: **nominations** are **due** to the office **NO LATER** than **September 7th**. We will vote for call committee members at a short Congregational Meeting **during** the 10 am drive-in service on September 13th. Please come to this very important service.

NOMINATIONS NEEDED FOR



CALL COMMITTEE

Please prayerfully consider nominating someone or yourself. We need at least 6 nominations for a vote on Sept. 13th. Watch for letter in the mail soon for meeting details.

CONTACT CHURCH OFFICE - DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 7TH

BOB REHDANTZ MEMORIAL

drive-thru **BRAT**  **FRY**

SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 • 11 AM - 1 PM
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
W8267 HWY 33 E, PORTAGE

proceeds benefiting the ministries of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

FAITH FORMATION

2020-21 REGISTRATION



Faith Formation

We have a new process for Sunday School and Confirmation registration this year. If your child was enrolled in Sunday or Confirmation last year, you will receive a letter and registration

form via email or in the mail if we don't have your email. This will be filled in with the information we currently have on file for your family. Directions on how to register will be in letter.

If your child is new to the program, you can fill out a registration form on our website. [Register Here](#). If you need a hard copy of the form, please contact the church office. There is a new page on our website: [Faith Formation](#). This is where families can access all the resources for Sunday School and Confirmation.

PRE-K THROUGH 5TH GRADE

Greetings, Here's what is happening with Faith Formation this year for grades pre-k through 5th grade:

All of our lessons will be presented in an online format. In making this difficult decision we followed the protocol as outlined by our BLC COVID-19 Task Force.

Given this situation, our Christian Education Ministry has been meeting regularly to develop a meaningful plan that we hope will equip our young ones and their families to grow in faith. In our planning we have earnestly listened to your responses to the recent poll. Your feedback has been priceless as we have been moving forward. Thank you!

- An online story and lesson will be premiering on our BLC YouTube site each Wednesday evening, starting September 16th. The story will follow the lectionary that Pastor Jen uses for preaching, so there will be continuity with sermons and Faith Formation Lessons. We will have materials available for those families that need an alternative way of receiving the video lesson.
- With the suggested changes, we will continue with the monthly Sunday School in a Bag (SSIB) monthly deliveries.
- Each family with Faith Formation students in pre-k through 3rd Grade will be receiving a *Spark*

Story Bible to accompany the story and lesson each week. These will be delivered with the first SSIB delivery. 4th and 5th grade students should be using their *Spark NRSV Bible* to accompany the story and lesson.

- **For families with Faith Formation Students in 4th grade, your kiddo will be receiving their *Spark NRSV Bible* during worship on Sunday, September 13 at the 10:00 am drive-in service.**

We're hopeful that even with the pandemic that our children and families will be equipped with the tools they need for meaningful Faith Formation. As with every aspect of our lives, we are learning and adapting as these unprecedented times continue. At this point we have set a story and lesson schedule for the remainder of Year A in the church calendar, which goes through mid-November. At that time, we will be reassessing our practices, based upon your feedback and the situation with the pandemic.

THANK YOU for your continuing partnership and participation in the Faith Formation of our young Beloved Children of God in our church family.

In Christ,

Jeanette Gessner, Pre-K through 5th Grade Faith Formation Superintendent
Halley Harms, Faith Formation Ministry Council Liaison
Rev. Jen Johnson, Pastor

CONFIRMATION

Greetings, Our BLC Confirmation mentors and I have been putting our hands together in prayer, our heads together in thought, and hearts together in faith to put together our 2020-2021 Confirmation Ministry Plan for 6th-8th grade students. We're hopeful that our work has produced a meaningful and flexible plan, one that fits within our COVID-19 Task Force protocols and offers our youth an opportunity to grow in relationship with God, one another, and the faith we proclaim in the ELCA. We thank you, parents for your continuing partnership with us as your kids journey toward affirming their baptism. We look forward to the year ahead as God works in us together.

Here's the plan:
We will begin meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2020.

As circumstances change with recommended safety precautions during the pandemic, we will be continually assessing and evaluating the way in which we will gather. As we learn together about the New Testament, our current protocol has us learning in a virtual format. We will have a weekly recorded lesson that will be available to students and their families. Reflections on the lessons will be submitted each week on an online learning platform called "Class Dojo." Students will also have regular Zooms meetings with their mentors. As we get closer to September 16, be on the look-out for information, instruction, and assistance in getting set up for the learning platforms.

Our primary text will be the Spark NRSV Bible that each BLC student receives in the 4th grade. We will also be sharing aspects of Lutheran living and faith, from ELCA sources that relate to each lesson. In addition to this we are offering hands-on opportunities for the students to practice their faith and apply what they are learning. These will necessarily follow the current COVID-19 safety protocol.

The 9th grade confirmands and their families have received an email from their mentor, Geoff Gilbert, regarding their journey toward the Rite of Affirmation of Baptism, which will take place on Sunday, October 25, 2020.

Is this a perfect plan? By no means! Is it a faithful plan? With God's help, we believe this to be so. We thank you for your input in the questionnaire earlier this summer. Your replies helped guide us as we discerned this plan. We appreciate you!

In Christ,
Geoff Gilbert
Ann Ciske
Halley Harms
Melissa Bradbury
Brenda Larson
Pastor Jen Johnson

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

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!



SCRIP REMINDER



Do you currently purchase from any of the following? KwikTrip, BP, Mobil, Kohls, Shopko, Walmart, Subway, Pizza Hut, Panera, Olive Garden? Then you can easily put money into Bethlehem's Scrip Program without taking an extra penny out of your bank account. Simply purchase SCRIP gift cards after online at shopwithscrip.com and a portion of that purchase will be donated back to Bethlehem. It's that simple! When ordering online use Bethlehem's enrollment code: 8D3B13BL8296, search, choose and place your order – you will not pay online. Print out your order and mail it along with your payment to church. We will let you know when your gift cards arrive and you can pick them up in the church office.

SUNDAY WORSHIP 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/>

LOGO FOR BETHLEHEM

As we move into Year Three of our Renewal Process: "Moving Beyond the Doors" is the focus, it seems like a good time to create an image to communicate with the community who Bethlehem Lutheran Church is. One way to do that is with a logo. "Why do we need a logo?", I'm sure some of you may be asking. A logo creates a uniform, consistent, and identifiable image and presence for our members and our community. "Where will we use a logo?" The logo will be used on our church website, Facebook page, letterhead, newspaper, t-shirts, anywhere we would have our name.

We want this to be a church-wide effort and get member feedback. We invite you to submit logo designs for consideration. Can you do this by submitting a hand-drawn image or digital drawing to the church office. The logo should represent BLC and our mission: "God's Family Serving Christ with Love". Consider our church name: Bethlehem in the design.

When we have received all of the designs by the submission deadline, we will then vote as a congregation and the one with the most votes will be our logo. Logo designs must be submitted to the church office no later than **September 30th** for consideration. In October, the designs will then be shared in the weekly newsletter and bulletin for members to vote for their favorite.

Here are five ideas about what makes for a successful logo:

- Great logos represent a church's values and character.
- Great logos tell a story.

- Great logos are simple. Complex logos get out of date quickly. Simple ones last for decades.
- Great logos are distinctive. They're memorable and recognizable.
- Great logos are scalable. They look good in color and black and white and in small and large sizes.

If you have any questions, please contact Julie in the church office.

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. As you can see we are holding our own, but your continued financial support is needed as we continue to do the Lord's work. Thank you for your help.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

PROFIT AND LOSS COMPARISON

August 1-24, 2020

	TOTAL				
	AUG 1-24, 2020	AUG 1-24, 2019 (PY)	JUL 1-24, 2020 (PP)	JAN 1 - AUG 24, 2020 (YTD)	JAN 1 - AUG 24, 2019 (PY YTD)
Income					
Income	12,874.70	23,698.88	16,913.73	172,079.86	170,432.73
Other Income	570.00	1,525.00	255.00	8,102.68	18,409.01
Total Income	\$13,444.70	\$25,223.88	\$17,168.73	\$180,182.54	\$188,841.74
GROSS PROFIT	\$13,444.70	\$25,223.88	\$17,168.73	\$180,182.54	\$188,841.74
Expenses	\$12,205.90	\$15,189.50	\$11,999.06	\$161,216.92	\$175,211.10
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$1,238.80	\$10,034.38	\$5,169.67	\$18,965.62	\$13,630.64
Other Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,450.00	\$7,461.00	\$15,137.01
Other Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,410.00	\$7,164.22	\$13,796.45
NET OTHER INCOME	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$40.00	\$296.78	\$1,340.56
NET INCOME	\$1,238.80	\$10,034.38	\$5,209.67	\$19,262.40	\$14,971.20

