

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2021 BEACON

LIVESTREAM WORSHIP is available on the Bethel Facebook page.

From Pastor Kent's Desk

I have never been so glad to see a year in the rearview mirror! Little did we realize what 2020 would be like at this time last year. I just went back and read my January article for last year. It was full of big plans and aspirations as I looked ahead to my first full calendar year as your pastor.

Covid-19 was out there in the news as some virus the Chinese people got by "eating bat meat" or something!!! We were not worried in the slightest! Little did we realize how it would change our lives! Nothing went the way we planned. We were forced to live day to day rather than months into the future.

In effect, the pandemic showed us the reality of human frailty. Danger, Death, Depression, and Discouragement became our constant companions. We learned the importance of preparation for sudden changes. Toilet paper nearly became the new currency! All kinds of new words entered our vocabulary. Social Distancing replaced handshakes and hugs. I was thrust into the world of Live Streaming, YouTube, upload speeds, and Mega Bytes.

So as 2021 begins I find myself reluctant to plan too far ahead. I am living one day at a time and not looking much farther than 1 month into the future.

Rebecca and I Bless God that we have not experienced any sickness and in fact have been growing stronger through exercise and recovery from the rigors of the past 5 years. We might have anticipated that 2020 would be a bearcat by the fact that we are just now observing the one-year anniversary of the death of my mother and Rebecca's younger sister.

I look back on this year with gratitude for the bulldog attitude of the leadership of this congregation. I have felt your support for my strategy of keeping our doors open for worship on Sunday. Between Facebook Live Stream, YouTube archiving, and meeting live for all who can make it, we have even increased our outreach! Some of our services and Bible Studies have had as many as 300-500 views! We only missed 6 weeks of live worship during the initial lockdown. Otherwise, we have met for worship for all who are able to attend.

Finally, we were able to bring joy and fun to the entire Parkersburg Community through our "Big Top Bethel" Carnival VBS, and "Angels in the Attic" Christmas program. Through Big Top Bethel we got to know many of our neighbor congregations and their staffs as we worked together on the day. Pastor Brian from the Congregational Church told me it was the most fun he had all year! Laughter abounded as we rediscovered our inner Clown and discovered that we can all be part of the Circus of Life! Angels in the Attic incorporated every one of our Sunday School kids who wanted to participate and showed the rest of us that you are "never too old" to be in a Christmas program!

So, I look forward to 2021 with hope for a gradual return to "normal" knowing full well that "normal" will forever be a relative concept when viewed through the prism of 2020. We pray for those businesses, congregations, and individuals who may have experienced loss or had to close their doors permanently because of this trial. At the same time, I give thanks to God for your faithfulness and the financial "savvy" of our leadership that has been able to maintain the solvency of Bethel. We have felt well taken care of by all of you.

God Bless you this New Year and please know that we love you and stand ready to serve you whatever your need!

Pastors Kent and Rebecca Wallace

December 13, 2020 Church Council Minutes

(to be reviewed at the January Council meeting)

Present: Allen Redman, JoAnne Schwarz, Jeff Jacobson, Dale Krohn, Greg Carolus, Sherry Brouwer, Marilyn Ingalls, Kyle Rice, and Pastor Wallace

Call to order by President Redman, "In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Devotions: None

Approval of the Agenda: Additional New Business Agenda item. 1. Review and approve 2021 Budget. Motion to approve the December Agenda, seconded and approved.

Approval of the November Minutes: Motion to approve the November minutes, seconded & approved.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Dudley presented the Treasurer's Report. A refund check was issued to the church from Century Link, although a monthly bill was sent to the church for an additional monthly payment. Secretary Jacobson will contact Century Link again. Treasurer Dudley advised that Jill Pliner has not cashed her checks for playing the piano. President Redman will talk to her and find out what her intentions are. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, seconded & approved.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Wallace did not make any in-home visits but did make phone calls to some of the Shut-Ins. Pastor Wallace will be on vacation December 27th, 2020 and January 3rd, 2021. Jill Pliner will lead the worship on December 27th and Pastor Craig will be contacted to see if he can lead the January 3rd service. A request by Council Person Ingalls to the Pastor to slow down when reciting the Lord's Prayer and Apostles Creed. Pastor Wallace said he would do that. A discussion followed on sending out cards or phone calls to members that don't feel comfortable attending church because of the Coronavirus. Council Person Ingalls will take charge of that project.

Ministry Team Reports:

1. Children & Youth: No meeting
2. Outreach & Fellowship: No meeting
3. Property Committee: No meeting. Greg Carolus advised that he contacted Harken Lumber and they will fix the Parsonage door.
4. Worship & Music Ministry Team: No meeting.
5. Social Concerns: Council Person Brouwer advised that three families received Christmas gifts yesterday and today from members of Bethel Lutheran.
6. Mission/Benevolence Ministry Team: No meeting

Correspondence/Bill Approval: Thank you from Devon Bernard referencing Bible Camp.

New Business:

1. Five volunteers agreed to help the Aplington/Parkersburg Food Bank on Friday, December 18th, 2020 at 2 PM.
2. Discussion about the lack of participation from acolytes. Jim Schwarz will contact the eligible youth.
3. Discussion in regard to the 2021 Budget. It was suggested that \$100.00 be added to Paraments and Banners #632. Motion to approve the 2021 Bethel Lutheran Church revised budget, seconded, and approved.

Motion to adjourn, seconded & approved.

Closing Prayers/The Lord's Prayer

Submitted by Jeff Jacobson, Recording Secretary

Hey Bethel Lutheran Kids – BIG or Little!

Jesus, Martin Luther and Children

Jesus: To Parents, Grandparents, guardians, teachers, The Church of Jesus Christ... “Whoever”...

Matthew 18:6 “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

There is much theological conjecture regarding this verse... especially relating to the word “children”; i.e., Is Jesus referring to actual children (under the age of parental consent) or is he referring to anyone who is young in The Faith? I’ve searched it over the years reading commentaries written by varied theologians, only still to question. I decided to go to the Greek.

“Matthew 18:6. σκανδαλίση: the opposite of receiving; treating harshly and contemptuously, so as to tempt to unbelief and apostasy. The pride and selfish ambition of those who pass for eminent Christians make many infidels.— ἕνα τ. μ. τ.: one of the large class of little ones; not merely child believers surely, but all of whom a child is the emblem, as regards social or ecclesiastical importance. Those who are caused to stumble are always little ones: “majores enim scandala non recipiunt,” Jerome. One of them: “frequens unius in hoc capite mentio,” Bengel. This is the one text in which Jesus speaks of Himself as the object of faith (vide The Kingdom of God, p. 263).— συμφέρει ... ἵνα: vide on Matthew 5:29.” (You can access this at studylight.org.)

It’s all Greek to me! (Smile.)

Anyway, faith is not mentioned in Matthew 18:1–5, but we know that it is not only humility that ushers a person into heaven; it is faith in the Son of God. An unpretentious,... (*SEE BELOW)... could be called a “childlike faith.”

Jesus: “When Jesus wanted to bless the children, He said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it” (Mark 10:14–15).

How does a child receive a gift? With openness, honesty, and unbridled JOY.

That type of happy authenticity should be a hallmark of **OUR** faith as we receive God’s gift in Christ.

Martin Luther:

“But know that to serve God is nothing else than to serve your neighbor and do good to him in love, be it a child, wife, servant, enemy, friend.... If you do not find yourself among the needy and the poor, where the Gospel shows us Christ, then you may know that your faith is not right, and that you have not yet tasted of Christ’s benevolence and work for you.”

(cont.)

Jesus, Martin Luther and Children (cont.)

How I love "Children's Ministry"! For it not only reminds me of who God really wants me to be, it allows me to "walk" in it! * ...HIS child, ...unpretentious, ...JOYFUL, ...genuine, ...guileless, ...honest, ...ingenuous, ...innocent, ...naïve, ...natural, ...real, ...simple, ...sincere, ...true, ...unaffected, ...weak, ...foolish...! (Read also 1 Corinthians 1: 26-31.)

I pray that GOD will bless Bethel Lutheran Church (and you personally) in 2021 abundantly, more than you could ask, or even imagine Ephesians 3:20!...

**And please, don't be afraid to
be as a child!**

Love to you all!

Rebecca Wallace

Annual Meeting

Bethel Lutheran Church's annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 24, 2021 at 10:15 am following worship.

The snow date is January 31, 2021 at 10:15 am following worship.

January Anniversaries

11 – Merle & Merna Schrage (57)

12 – Roger & Doralene Renken (47)

January Birthdays

- 2 – Bonnie Gerloff
- 3 – Jenny Hansmann
- 3 – Janet Mennen
- 7 – Eileen Lupkes
- 15 – Thomas Mann
- 21 – Daniel Hemann
- 22 – Zachary Harreld
- 23 – Janice Gerloff
- 23 – Olivia Luhring
- 23 – George Miller
- 24 – Jeff Johnson
- 25 – Alex Bixby
- 28 – Perry Bernard
- 28 – Jeff Jacobson
- 30 – Bill Hager
- 30 – Marilyn Ingalls
- 31 – Mary Rice

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!!!!

Jennifer Hansmann for many years has volunteered in organizing and collating the weekly bulletin and the monthly Beacon. She would like to have a much-deserved break, although she will continue as the financial secretary. If you're looking for a rewarding way to pitch in, pray about volunteering your time and using your skills for only a few hours out of your week to help the church. The task can be done by one person, but maybe 2 or 3 volunteers want to take on this task together. If you are interested, please contact a council member or just talk to Jennifer.

Thanks, Bethel Lutheran Church Council

Thank You

Thank you for cards and phone calls while I am in the Allison Care Center. I miss my church family.

Leona Wallbaum

Worship Assistant Schedule for January--Worship Service 9:00 am

	January 3	January 10	January 17	January 24	January 31
USHERS	Greg Carolus				
ORGANISTS/PIANISTS	Janet Mennen/Sharleen Hubbard/Jill Pliner/Jacque Craig				
ALTAR GUILD	Bonnie Gerloff				
ACOLYTES	Ava Mann	Corryn Mann	Gavin Bernard	Evan Palmer	Ava Mann
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	Jeff Jacobson JoAnne Schwarz		Jeff Jacobson JoAnne Schwarz		

December Summary of Attendance and Financial Contributions

	Attendance	Bene./Mission	Current	Parsonage Improvements	Operation Cornerstone - Tuckpointing
Sunday, December 6	36	\$201.63	\$2,549.67	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sunday, December 13	45	\$106.33	\$1,493.97	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sunday, December 20	38	\$107.83	\$1,504.47	\$0.00	\$0.00
December 24 & 27	57/18	\$149.23	\$2,157.07	\$0.00	\$0.00
January 1-December 27, 2020		\$6,518.16	\$91,410.54	\$250.00	\$24,808.00

AP Quilters

The quilters had a short year with only quilting 2 1/2 months. We were able to complete 84 quilts and gave 30 quilts to the following organizations:

Friends of the Family	12
Hospice in Waverly	12
Timothy Christian School Benefit	3
Social Concerns	1
Bethel Church Family (graduates)	2

Thank you for all of you who have donated fabric and other supplies.

Organized Prayer for Bethel Families

Week of January 3 – Aaron & Angie Ellermann & family, Ken & Ranae Knock & family

Week of January 10 – Dan & Kay Frey & family, Jeremy & Jennifer Buss & family

Week of January 17 – Allen & Rachael Redman & family, Kyle & Melissa Henrichs & family

Week of January 24 – Jeff & Diane Johnson

Week of January 31 – Tom & Sara Mann & family, Vada Luhring

January 2021 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 9:00 am Worship/Holy Communion/ World Hunger Sunday	4	5	6 6:00-7:00 pm Confirmation 7:30 pm Adult Bible Class	7	8	9
10 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 10:45 am Church Council	11	12	13 6:00-7:00 pm Confirmation 7:30 pm Adult Bible Class	14	15	16
17 9:00 am Worship/Holy Communion/ Noisy Nickels 10:15 am Sunday School & Adult Bible Class	18	19	20 6:00-7:00 pm Confirmation 7:30 pm Adult Bible Class	21	22	23
24 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am ANNUAL MEETING	25	26	27 6:00-7:00 pm Confirmation 7:30 pm Adult Bible Class	28	29	30
31 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School & Adult Bible Class						

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