

The Bethlehem Star

A PUBLICATION OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CHILDREN'S CENTER



Volume 70, Issue 5

May 2020

From Pastor Bill

How is God redeeming in these days?

We are on an interesting sojourn. Unprecedented in our memories. Still our "History of Faith" is full of unprecedented pilgrimages. At God's call Sarah and Abraham left their homeland in old age to find a new land and a heritage of descendants; more numerous than the stars, all promised by God. Their grandson Jacob ran from that very land and his family, to go to a strange land for refuge with only a promise that God would be with him. His son Joseph was sold into a foreign land and learned how to be great and humble before God in a place not his home, yet his refuge. Moses brought the news that God was with the people even when that refuge became an oppressive state and the people in slavery felt abandoned. His courage to do this came from the God that promised to go with him and the people. God preserved a faithful remnant during the exile to return home with prophetic words and a vision of a Holy people. Jesus gathered disciples to follow and learn the Holy ways of a royal rule by God. The disciples became witnesses to the ongoing presence of God with all people.



Our journey is remarkable marked with the admonition against travel. Our home is a refuge and a place of regulated captivity. Yet the opportunity for faithfulness to one another, has had so many tools. The mail, telephones, computers.... Written, spoken, seen connections supporting the entire community are available. None need be left behind, but "how" is the question that makes this a journey.

Our community is filled with faith stories spanning generations. We have many who made pilgrimages to this community, who inherited and found a people of faith here. Unprecedented histories. How will these stories be preserved and uplifted in this time? We do not know all that the coming weeks will bring, nor months, or even next year. Will our home become a foreign land? Where will we find refuge? We all want, even expect things to return to normal. Is that a genuine goal for people on a journey? The best normal is an abiding always: we do believe God is with us. So how we make this time, our time, to be remembered as our witness of God being faithfully present? A time of renewed zeal for worship, study, connections, service and giving. A time of our witness to the redeemer of all

Peace,

Pastor Bill

Keep in Touch with Bethlehem

Be sure to add us on Facebook and YouTube to watch the latest worship videos. Our Facebook page is [facebook.com/BLCSantaRosa](https://www.facebook.com/BLCSantaRosa) Our YouTube Channel is Pastor Bill Bethlehem Santa Rosa, don't forget to like, comment and subscribe!

*Gathered to worship,
Equipped by the Holy Spirit,
Strengthened through community,
Sent in peace to serve the Lord.*

A Blessing

O bless this people, Lord, who seek
their own face

Under the mask and can hardly
recognize it...

O bless this people that breaks its
bond...

And with them, all the peoples of
Europe,

All the peoples of Asia,

All the peoples of Africa,

All the peoples of America,

Who sweat blood and sufferings.

And see, in the midst of these
millions of waves

The sea swell of the heads of my
people.

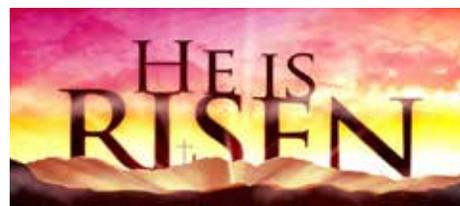
And grant to their warm hands that
they may clasp

The earth in a girle of brotherly
hands,

Beneath the rainbow of thy peace.

Leopold Sedar Senghor

Submitted by Lynne Schouest



A word from Martin

"My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary."

-Martin Luther



DVD worship

We understand that not all Members have online capabilities to continue worshipping with BLC during the COVID-19 crisis. If you are interested in receiving copies of our online worship via DVD, please contact the office 539-5252 and we will mail DVD copies to your home.



Bethlehem Believers Update

I hope everyone is staying healthy and safe during this COVID-19 issue. Just wanted to reach out and let you know that the league has cancelled the 2020 softball season to prevent the spread of the virus. So Bethlehem will continue to hang on to the title for another year. Not quite the way I wanted to obtain it but better safe than sorry.

A special thank you to our players in the medical field who are taking care of those who are ill! Stay safe.

I will miss playing this season with each of you. Please reach out and let me know how you and your families are doing. Take care.

Coach Tony

tony@barnesmiller.com



Second Mile Sunday

On May 10th, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, along with all Lutheran churches in the Sierra Pacific Synod will have a basket available for contributions to support Mt. Cross Ministries.



Mt. Cross Ministries' main site is located in the coastal redwood forest of the Santa Cruz Mountains, 20 minutes from the Santa Cruz beaches. Mt. Cross offers summer camp and retreat opportunities for all ages. Most Mt. Cross directed camps are on the main site and many, like Day Camps, take place in communities all over northern California.

Churches, schools, clubs and other organizations use Mt. Cross as their group retreat center by utilizing the Outdoor Conference Center (OCC). Mt. Cross provides facilities, meal service and program support (as desired) to make your group's experience as successful as possible. Many groups take advantage of the Challenge Course and/or climbing tower.

Established in 1948, Mt. Cross has a unique history in Northern California.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Children's Center
1300 St. Francis Road, Santa Rosa, California 95409
Sunday worship services: 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (*Suspended*)

Church Office: 707/539-5252, Hours: 9-3, M-F

Church Website: www.blc-bcc.com

Church Email: blc@sonic.net

Children's Center: 707/538-2266

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BLCSantaRosa

YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UC5xTmtCjUddP81wRiTd2C8w

Pastor:

Bill Wessner
707-782-8703 (Pastor's cell)
Email: PastorBill.BLC@gmail.com

Linda Knapp Witness & Service
Carolyn Cole-Schweizer, Worship
Michelle Thomson, Youth
Janet Krug, BCC Representative
Siri Fenson, Bethlehem WELCA President

Congregational Officers:

Cal Eriksen, President
Brad Powell, Vice President
Bev Powell, Secretary
Beverly Schaap, Treasurer
Susan Jenkins, Financial Secretary

Staff:
Michelle Frabotta, Parish Administrator
Deborah McNally, Tiffany Perry-Co-Directors
Bethlehem Children's Center 538-2266
Janet Bertoli, Adult & Youth Choirs
Barbara Laferriere, Organist, Adult Choir,
Melissa Kuhn, Bell Choir
Laura Lightfoot, Youth Choirs
Debbie Knudtson, Parish Nurse 537-7450

Council Commissioners:

Nancy Trbovich, Education
Nick Keane, Property
George Kuhn, Stewardship

Rwanda School Update

March 20, 2020

Hello to our community,

For the last few months we have all been hearing and watching the news about the worldwide spread of the Coronavirus. We have changed the way we interact with others and now the pandemic has reached our school.

Rwamagana Leaders' School has received notifications from Rwandan government officials that our school in Rwamagana must close for the time being. We have been working with Moses and our staff in Rwanda to see that all our students have moved to safe living quarters.

First and foremost, our thoughts and prayers go out to all who are infected with COVID-19. We pray for their fast and safe recovery. We also appreciate and pray for the doctors and healthcare workers, the local communities, and governments around the world who are on the frontlines working to contain this Coronavirus. We pray for the safety of our students, staff and teachers, and I speak for our board in saying that we stand ready to provide any assistance. To each of us, we need to remain optimistic that the world is working to combat this challenge and that we can do our part by washing our hands, keeping our distance from others, and following proper cleaning protocols.

We do not know what will happen in the weeks and months ahead, and I ask you to keep our school, its students, faculty and staff in your prayers. We have pledged to continue salaries in Rwanda, and as we move forward I will keep you informed about our school.

Please stay safe and healthy and know that together we will stand stronger.

-Karl J. Smith, President

Christ in Our Home

The April-May-June edition of Christ in Our Home is now available. Please send an email or contact the Church office for a copy to be mailed to your home. Please specify if you would like a large print edition.



These daily devotionals are another great way to worship while we Shelter-in-Place.

"Zoom-ers" Needed

If you are familiar with, or curious to learn Zoom Meetings, Pastor Bill would like to include more faces in our worship.

Please join us for Prayers of the Church. Sharing of the Peace. Perhaps snacks after worship.



And what ever else our collective imaginations cook up.

Send an email to Pastor Bill to be included in the invitations.

PastorBill.BLC@gmail.com
(Subject Line: Zoom Meetings)

Genuine Peace

From *Christ in Our Home* (May 2020)

[Jesus said,] "My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives." (John 14:27)

Before Jesus' death, he gathered for a Passover meal with his disciples, washed their feet, and encouraged them to stand firm despite coming troubles. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide them. And he offered them peace unlike anything the world gives.

During the season of Easter, we are encouraged by Jesus' resurrection. We know that because Jesus is risen, we can be too. We trust in that resurrection-and sometimes we doubt. The peace Jesus promised is not the fake peace of avoidance or the inauthentic peace of a pasted-on smile. This peace is deep and wide, echoing powerfully from Jesus' words to the disciples down to us. genuine peace.

Jesus does not leave us alone in our fear or abandon us in our doubt. When we face challenges or hopelessness or grief, Jesus brings comfort: "Peace be with you." In seasons of uncertainty in our lives, these words can reassure us and renew our confidence and faith.

Jesus, in a world that needs to know your resurrection, let us hear your powerful voice of peace. Amen.

Prayer concern: People facing mental health challenges

TEACH PEACE



MAY

- 1 Russ Mortensen, Brad Powell
- 2 Emmett Mokaram, Brian & Joni Schmidt (22)
- 3 Leslee & Lyndon Cramer (46)
- 4 Anna Smith, Mary Schroeder
- 5 Amanda Knudtzon, Patsy Streckfuss, John & Danielle Sass (19)
- 6 Mira Kiick, Kay Fish, Michelle Thomson
- 7 David Smith, Mark Parnell
- 8 Rachel Walls
- 9 Peter Preston
- 10 Janis Biksa, Anthony Mack
- 11 Chris Hershwitzky, Camden Morrow
- 12 Troy Dauler
- 13 Alicia Virtue
- 15 Mark Jacobson
- 16 Bob & Elaine Adams (62)
- 17 Rosalie Smith, Pat Zivot, Paul Meyer
- 18 Terry Wilson
- 20 Jesse Claasen
- 21 Amelia Comstock-Skipp
- 22 Marcus Hershwitzky
- 23 John Huotari
- 24 Dorothy Ronne
- 26 Natalie Back
- 27 Patrick & Vanessa Riggs (13)
- 28 Erin Abel, Gail Bowers, Patrick & Lisa Kelly (16)
- 29 Tom Ziegler
- 30 Julie Barnes
- 31 Arend Folkens, Madison Frabotta

IN THE POTTER'S HANDS

WHEN WE'RE GOING THROUGH
TIMES OF TRIALS
WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHY,
BUT WE KNOW THAT WE ARE THE WORK OF HIS HANDS.

A WORK THAT IS ALWAYS IN PROGRESS.
MAY YOU FEEL HIS LOVE
MAKING YOU STRONGER AS HE MOLDS YOU
INTO HIS OWN PRECIOUS WORK OF ART.

SLOWLY,
IN THE POTTER'S SKILLFUL HANDS,
OUR CLAY TAKES FORM
AT TIMES WE'RE PULLED AND STRETCHED
IN WAYS THAT MAKE US PLEAD,
"AREN'T YOU FINISHED YET?"

BUT THE POTTER REPLIES,
"BE PATIENT,
YIELD TO MY TOUCH.

FOR I AM MAKING YOU
A THING OF BEAUTY
IN MY SIGHT."

Submitted by Judy Flowers



Push Pause

By: Kathleen Stauffer

(The Lutheran Message, 2019-2020)

Thanks to my parents, I typically pray four times a day: before each meal and before falling asleep at night. "Come Lord Jesus, be our guest..." is my mealtime prayer. I have given up the "Now I lay me down to sleep..." evening prayer, unless my grandchildren are over, and I pray the Lord's Prayer along with my heartfelt concerns and expressions of thanks and praise. *(Continued pg. 6)*



A call to prayer in the time of a pandemic

This is a call to prayer, to be practiced every Tuesday at noon, in your time zone. (Use it daily, if you wish.)

Read: Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pray: follow each petition by naming specific individuals or needs; add additional petitions as needed

For those who are ill

For those with little access to healthcare

For healthcare workers

For those who feel isolated

For those who are in unsafe places

For those who are anxious or worried

For leaders facing difficult decisions

For those who continue to work in challenging settings

For those driven by greed or careless disregard

Reflect: Reflect on these questions. You may even be inspired to journal daily with these questions. Consider our resource [Journaling: Create your own sacred writings](#).

Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves (*Matthew 22:39*).

How are you loving yourself today? What is your self-care strategy?

How are you loving your neighbor today?

For we will rejoice always, pray without ceasing and give thanks in all circumstances.

(*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*).

Garden Help!

Harvest for the Hungry Community Garden

If you are under 65 and like to play in the dirt, please consider going to the garden any weekday from 9-12 to help prepare and plant so that we will have produce to give away this summer. They have stopped all volunteers over 65 from working there at this time so only a couple of volunteers are available each day so that means that we may not have much food to give away. Each year we give away to the food pantries in town over 20,000 pounds of food and would like to do so again this year. But we need help now. Thank you. The garden is located behind Christ Church United Methodist at 1717 Yulupa Avenue.

For more information, call Beverly Schaap 527-2872

Tubfrim Tally

The Tubfrim stamp collection effort is moving ahead nicely with steady weekly contributions of cancelled postage stamps. Especially beneficial are deposits made by folks who have access to business accounts where there is an abundance of incoming mail. Our own church office is good example; Michelle regularly puts in a generous amount. Given the severe international impact of the coronavirus, your stamp contributions are now even more important. Remember, the stamps fund aid to ill and disabled Norwegian children and that in turn, provides relief to the overall health system. ~Max Fenson.



Push Pause

(Continued pg. 6)

Recently, a friend shared an acronym for hitting all the bases when praying:

A-Acknowledge LORDship

C-Confession (including sins of omission, commission, self-submission)

T-Thanks and praise

S-Supplications, ending with "Thy will be done"

God cares about us; God cares about creation; God cares about the nations of the world. The Bible verse, "Pray without ceasing" used to give me a bit of a guilt complex-how is that possible, Lord?

However, I have come to believe that prayer is not just speaking words of praise, thanks, supplicating, and confessing. It is an attitude. In other words, where are your thoughts? Am I listening to the Holy Spirit? If I fill my head with scripture, I'm more apt to have prayerful thoughts. God's Word is there for a reason. It is a connection to an Almighty God.

I have determined this morning that I can get better at praying without ceasing if I PAUSE. Yes, actually stop to pray more than four times a day. If you're like me, you have to write this down as a reminder. So, today, after lunch, I'm going to a quiet place after cleaning off the table, and acknowledge God as my Savior, confess my sins large and small, thank Him for the blessings He has bestowed, mention my concerns, and yes, Thy will be done.

It's a start.

Just maybe I'll find other times during the day to PAUSE wherever I am, knowing God wants my company.

I've noticed that the closer I feel to my Creator, the more content I am.

Pausing more often in prayer just might make my day!



Benefit BLC with Online Shopping

Many of you are shopping from home as we shelter-in-place. Don't forget, if you are shopping at Amazon, you can shop instead at smile. amazon.com and increase donations for Bethlehem Lutheran Church. AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support BLC every time you shop, at no cost to you. Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price (.5%) To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile. amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping.





These are interesting times, but not unique

When Martin Luther was dealing with the Black Death, he wrote in 1527 these wise words that can help inform the way we approach things happening in our world right now.

“I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air and, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus, perchance, inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.” From Luther’s Works Volume 43, page 132, in the letter “Whether one may flee from a Deadly Plague”, written to Rev. John Hess.

The WELCA board members thank Leslee Cramer, the 2018-2019 BLC WELCA president, who took on updating the 2020 Program and Directory. It is now completed - and with Michelle’s great help – printed. All Circle members will get their copies when we meet again.

As so many of us women of BLC are age 65 and over, we have been told, and wisely so, to shelter in place and can therefore not volunteer to help at, for example, Elisha’s Food Pantry. But, we CAN keep in contact with each other by calling or e-mailing each other. We can maybe even ZOOM each other! *“Be a rainbow in someone else’s cloud”*.

Elisha’s Pantry is open and serves up to 100 needy persons each Thursday afternoon. Help by persons younger than 65 is badly needed to fill bags and give them out to the clients, who will be driving by in their cars. This takes place in the CUMC parking lot on Yulupa (corner of Hoen) Road. Your help would be greatly, greatly appreciated. Contact Siri Fenson (303-7860 or sirimax@att.net) for details.

Stay home, healthy, safe and positive! *“We shall overcome”*.

Siri Fenson, BLC’s WELCA President

BCC Update

We pray you are all healthy, safe and weathering the storm of this pandemic! With the help of many at Bethlehem Lutheran Church the Children's Center was able to apply for the Paycheck Protection Program loan to help pay teachers during our closure. We are still unsure if we will receive the funds but our application has been processed through Exchange Bank. We are in the queue and pray the money doesn't run out. Your daily prayers are very much appreciated! We would like to thank everyone involved for your help with the application process especially Beverly Schapp, Peggy Bimbi, Cal Eriksson, the BCC School Board and anyone else who helped or encouraged. We would also like to thank Pastor Bill for his continued support. We are forever grateful!

Many BCC families and BLC members generously gave donations to BCC totaling over \$10,000. The donations were used to give teachers a partial paycheck on April 20th. We thank you for your giving spirits! We continue to keep all of you in our daily prayers for health, safety and hope. With God's help we will get through this!

Psalm 57:1 Have mercy on us, our God, have mercy on us, for in You we take refuge. We will take refuge in the shadow of Your wings until the disaster has passed.

Blessings,

Deborah, Tiffany and the BCC Staff

Treasurer's Report

Beverly Schaap

March 2020

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$16,840	\$28,660	-\$11,820
Expenses	\$25,322	\$36,035	-\$10,713
Net	-\$8,482	-\$7,375	-\$1,107

YTD 2020

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$71,161	\$74,360	-\$3,199
Expenses	\$80,242	\$96,497	-\$16,255
Net	-\$9,081	-\$22,137	\$13,056

Amount needed to meet the budget \$7,625 per week
March \$3,363



Memorial Day

Originally called Decoration Day, from the early tradition of decorating graves with flowers, wreaths and flags, Memorial Day is a day for remembrance of those who have died in service to our country. It was first widely observed on May 30, 1868 to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers.

By the late 1800s, many more cities and communities observed Memorial Day, after World War I, it became an occasion for honoring those who died in all of America's wars and was then more widely established as a national holiday throughout the United States.

In 1971, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act and established that Memorial Day was to be commemorated on the last Monday of May.

Memorial Day is commemorated at Arlington National Cemetery each year with a ceremony in which a small American flag is placed on each grave. Traditionally, the President lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. About 5,000 people attend the ceremony annually.

Celebrate Memorial Day
 Monday, May 25, 2020.

The deadline for the next issue of The Bethlehem Star is May 18, 2020.

Please submit information and story ideas to the church office or email blc@sonic.net

Should you have any comments or suggestions that will help improve The Star, we will be pleased to receive them.

Should you wish to discontinue your subscription to The Star please let us know via email.