

The Bethlehem Star

A PUBLICATION OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CHILDREN'S CENTER



Volume 71, Issue 3

March 2021

What comes next?

Dear BLC Community,

Recently, members of the Witness and Service Commission made phone calls to members of Bethlehem Lutheran. Thanks to Elaine Adams, Carolyn Cole-Schweizer, Cal Eriksen, Siri Fenson, Linda Knapp, Joy Petty, and Bev Schaap, for making those calls. The purpose of the phone calls was to check in, connect personally, and build community. We wanted to see how folks are doing! If no one answered the phone, callers left a friendly message, but I have been told that many long and meaningful conversations took place.

One of the frequently asked questions was, "What's next?" "Now that Pastor Diane is here, what comes next?" Folks were wondering specifically about the call process and whether we might resume in-person worship, but I think it was also a general kind of wondering as well as a longing, a wish, to feel as if things are moving forward. After two years without a called pastor, and a year of pandemic-related seeming standstill, what comes next?

What I can tell you about the call process is that our Ministry Site Profile has been recently updated and the call committee has met with Rev. Bill Wong, Call Process Assistant for the Sierra Pacific Synod. The committee feels positive about the meeting, and confident that Pastor Wong is aware of our needs and working on our behalf. Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find a report from Call Committee Chair Carolyn Cole-Schweizer, and she will share with you more specifics.

Many of you are aware that a few weeks ago the Supreme Court ruled against California's ban on in-person, indoor worship, and some have asked whether this means that BLC will resume worship in our sanctuary. All congregations in our Synod received the following communication from the office of the bishop, summarized as follows.

- 1) Although in-person, indoor worship may resume, only 25% of the space may be occupied, and singing and chanting are not permitted;
- 2) we are nowhere near having vaccinated the entire population and any such indoor gathering puts people at risk; and
- 3) it is best to follow the guidance of local health officials.

Given all this, the BLC council agreed that now is not the time to resume in-person, indoor worship. However, the council would like you to know that there is a committee in place to consider the issue, and the members are monitoring the situation.

Well, if we aren't allowed back into the sanctuary for worship and we don't know how many months it will be before you call a new pastor, you may well be asking, what does come next?

(Continued on page 2)

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



Elisha's Pantry Essentials:

- Kleenex
- Toilet paper
- Small size laundry detergent
(from The Dollar Store)
- Dish soap
- Regular size shampoo
- Toothpaste & toothbrushes
- Deodorant
- Skin lotion
- Razors
- Masks

**Drop donations off @ BLC on
Wed. or Fri. 9 AM - 3 PM
Next Pick-up Date: March 17th
~Thank you!~**

What comes next?

(Continued from page 1)

I think the answer is that right now, as we wait for vaccines and for a new pastor, we are engaged in the task of continuing our life and ministry together while learning to do it a little differently, which mostly means doing it on Zoom. Who would have thought that doing Christ's work in 2021 would include having good internet service, a working laptop, tablet, or smartphone, and learning some Zoom skills? Not many would have predicted that, but here we are!

Is Zoom the same as being together in person? No, of course not. But you know what? It's pretty good. It can be really good. Better by far than being alone, better than not worshipping, than not caring for our neighbors. I invite you to Zoom church on Sundays at 10 AM, to Lenten Vesper services on Wednesdays at 7 PM, and to special events coming up like First Sunday Adult Education on March 7 at 9 AM before church, Pretzel Sunday on March 21 before church (be sure to order your pretzels!), and an offering of letters for Bread for the World in April. Remember – the great thing about Zoom is that there's no traveling involved, and you only have to look good from the front, and the waist up!

Do you feel frustrated because you don't have the right equipment to go online or you don't know how? Reach out to me or to any member of council, and we'll find a way to help. Do you wonder if it's worth it? It is! The body of Christ has always been a mystical and marvelous thing, sometimes physical and sometimes spiritual, but now it's also digital! You're important and so is BLC's community and ministry. I want all of us to be part of what's happening next.

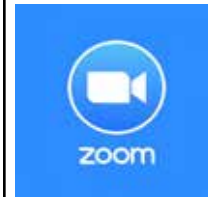
In Christ,
-Pastor Diane

Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Children's Center 1300 St. Francis Road, Santa Rosa, California 95409 Sunday Zoom worship : 10:00 a.m.	
Church Office: 707/539-5252, Hours: 9-3, W & F Church Email: blc@sonic.net Facebook: www.facebook.com/BLCSantaRosa YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCA1g8W7SFMET386SfZBdwZQ	Church Website: www.blc-bcc.com Zoom Meeting ID: 889 9423 0337 Password: church
Bridge Pastor: Reverend Diane Bowers, Ph.D. 510-816-5765 (Pastor's cell) Email: Revdrdiane@yahoo.com	Linda Knapp, Witness & Service Michelle Frabotta, Worship Michelle Thomson, Youth Susan Jenkins, BCC Executive Board Siri Fenson, Bethlehem WELCA President
Congregational Officers: Jason Kracht, President Janet Bertoli, Vice President Carolyn Cole-Schweizer, Secretary Beverly Schaap, Treasurer Susan Jenkins, Financial Secretary	Staff: Michelle Frabotta, Parish Administrator Janet Bertoli, Adult & Youth Choirs Barbara Laferriere, Organist, Adult Choir, Laura Lightfoot, Youth Choirs
Council Commissioners: Laura Lightfoot, Education Cal Eriksen, Property George Schweizer, Stewardship	

Sun. March 14th



Sunday Morning Worship - 10 a.m.



Meeting ID:
889 9423 0337
Password:
church

Dial In: 1-669-900-6833
Passcode: 970869#

Contemporary Sunday, March 21st

One Sunday a month, the Bethlehem community worships accompanied by guitar, piano, bass, flute and other instrumentation at the 10:00 a.m. Zoom service. The pattern of liturgy is familiar, the songs often have a more contemporary rhythm and "feel". Be sure to check out, and enjoy, Bethlehem's monthly "contemporary" Sunday, March 21st.



Second Mile Sunday

On March 14th, Bethlehem Lutheran Church along with the other churches in the Sierra Pacific Synod support a special Lutheran program with a special offering, beyond your pledged offering. This month the focus is on Campus Ministry.

The mission of Campus Ministry is "Expanding minds, deepening faith, and inspiring service". There are seven different colleges that provide many different programs for students from; a place to connect with God, to worship with peers and to have Bible studies; to community outreach such as homeless shelters, food pantries and low-income home building projects.

These are the seven Northern California Campuses:



The Belfry:

Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry at UC Davis

Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry at CSU Monterey Bay

University Church at Stanford:
Episcopal Lutheran Campus Ministry

Lutheran Campus Ministry of Fresno

University Chapel of Berkeley:
Lutheran & Episcopal Campus Ministry at Cal

Lutheran Campus Ministry at UC Santa Cruz

Sacramento Area Campus Ministry

Online Giving Options

We have a new giving option called GivePlus. To access this option, start at the home page of the church's website (blc-bcc.com) and look for the Giving Options button. This will take you to the Ways to Give page. Choose giving online through GivePlus.

Once you are at the GivePlus page, you can either make a one time donation without creating an account or you can sign up for a GivePlus account that allows you to schedule recurring donations. With either method, you first select a fund. These are the categories you would normally see on your envelopes such as Budget Expenses, Missions, and seasonal offerings or special offerings designated to specific groups or events.

Once you have selected a fund and entered a donation amount, the next page allows you to enter your debit/credit card or checking/savings account information. Next you review and submit your gift by clicking Donate Now. One advantage of creating a GivePlus account is that you can review your giving history, manage your recurring donations or update payment information. Either way, your contributions will be recorded so that we can provide you with an accurate accounting of your giving.

If you need help setting up GivePlus or have questions, please contact Susan Jenkins at 707-537-0717 or rvwhine@sbcglobal.net.

Women's History Month

Each March is designated Women's History Month by Presidential proclamation. The month is set aside to honor women's contributions in American history.

Did you Know? Women's History Month started as Women's History Week in 1978, a local celebration started right here in Santa Rosa¹. The movement spread across the country as other communities initiated their own Women's History Week celebrations the following year.

With gratitude for those who have gone before and hope for the future, the ELCA gives thanks to God for the ministry of women. In 2021 we celebrate over 50 years of Lutheran women being ordained in the United States. 40 years of women of color being ordained and 10 years of LGBTQIA+ individuals being able to serve freely².

¹National Women's History Museum.org ²ELCA.org





March

- 1 Gary Wilkening
- 2 Else Gillette
- 3 Elaine Bowers
- 4 Steve & Kathleen Sturgeon (42)
- 5 Amanda Knudtson, Pastor Diane Bowers
- 6 Joyce Mortensen-Child, David Vogel
- 8 Leslee Cramer
- 9 Kristi Marlar, Stephen Virtue
- 10 Kathy Phillips
- 11 Gary Stein, Donald Schaap, Gabriel Gutsch
- 12 Charlene Shaw, George Kuhn Max Fenson, Luke Anderson
- 15 Steve Jenkin, Dennis Marvin
- 18 Jennifer Wong
- 19 Mark Knapp, Maureen Caudill
- 21 Janet & JJ Krug (39)
- 24 Leah Morrow
- 26 Bob Bimbi
- 27 Francine Majcherek, Ronald Barnekow, Nicholas Barnes
- 28 Dylan Thomson, Hannah Kelly
- 29 Justin Majcherek, Nicholas Jey
- 31 Beverly Schaap



**We
Celebrate
YOU!**

BLC Book Club picks for 2021

Join Zoom Meeting:

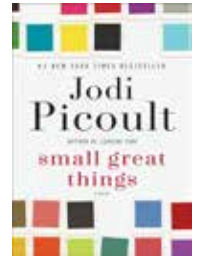
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89943393085?pwd=UjZhdnI2L3kyQ2RPUy8xSVErS0xldz09>

Meeting ID: 899 4339 3085

Passcode: 526355

Dial In: 1-669-900-6833

Passcode: 970869#



Tuesday March 2- *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult

“[Picoult] offers a thought-provoking examination of racism in America today, both overt and subtle. Her many readers will find much to discuss in the pages of this topical, moving book.”—Booklist (starred review)

Tuesday April 6- *The Night Watchman* by Louise Erdrich

“National Book Award winner Erdrich once again calls upon her considerable storytelling skills to elucidate the struggles of generations of Native people to retain their cultural identity and their connection to the land.” -- Library Journal, Starred Review

Tuesday May 4- *The Island of Sea Women* by Lisa See

"Lisa See is a New York Times bestselling author, a thorough researcher and a wonderful storyteller. In this novel, she seamlessly weaves history, tradition and culture into a heartfelt story about love and forgiveness. It's an unforgettable read."—Toronto Star

Tuesday June 1- *Elizabeth Is Missing* by Emma Healey

“Part mystery, part meditation on memory, part Dickensian revelation of how apparent charity may hurt its recipients, this is altogether brilliant.” -- Booklist (starred review)

Meetings start at 7 p.m. All are welcome!

Call Committee Update - March 2021

The Call Committee was introduced to Pastor Bill Wong in February. Pastor Wong is the Sierra-Pacific Synod Call Process Administrator assigned to work with BLC on our pastoral search. Pastor Wong met with the committee via Zoom, reviewing our Ministry Site Profile and familiarizing himself with BLC's vision and mission and expectations for a new pastor. While COVID-19 is impacting the process, the committee is prepared to receive its first list of candidates.





Essentials table at Elisha's Pantry

BLC Volunteers: Melissa Preston & granddaughter, Kiana passing out "essentials" to Pantry clients. See our "Shopping List" on page 1.

Elisha's Pantry

"Besides free food every Thursday, Elisha's Pantry clients can, on the 3rd Thursday of the month, each choose a few items from the "Personal Items" table.

These essentials are donated by members of the three sponsoring congregations. You, members and friends of BLC, have been most kind in helping to fill this table and the hope is that you will continue to do so.

As usual, your donations may be brought to the church kitchen on Wednesdays and Fridays, 9AM - 3PM, but if those days are not convenient, I can meet you in the parking lot or come by your home. 303-7860 or sirimax@att.net

"People will forget what you said and did, but never how you made them feel"

The hungry people in Santa Rosa are forever thankful for how you make them feel.

Siri Fenson (member of Elisha's Pantry Steering Committee)

Redwood Empire Food Bank

Thank you for your contributions from Shrove Tuesday Brinner for Redwood Empire Food Bank. 22% of their income comes from individual contributions of almost \$13 million. 96% of contributions go directly to feeding the needy.

The food bank serviced 26 million meals in 2020 which helped 100,000 people.

They have several programs:

Every Child, Every Day which serves Summer lunches for needy kids that families can pick up at several schools. It has been continued to a year round program during the pandemic. The **Afternoon Café** is for kids that wouldn't have a good dinner too. Another is for families of preschool kids that can pick up food for them.

Senior Security program gives monthly food to the elderly. They are now delivering it to them rather than coming to pick it up. They have special help for those with diabetes too.

Neighborhood Hunger Network has set up 42 distribution centers during the pandemic in addition to providing food to other food banks in town including FISH and Elisha's Pantry.

They do have a staff but rely on lots of volunteers too. They are always looking for more help so if you can help, go to their website. You can sign up for a few hours, for one day or longer!

- Beverly Schaap



Lenten Quiz

Given during "Shrove Tuesday Pancake Brinner" at BLC

1. How many days in Lent?
2. Lent started on?
3. Lent ends on?
4. That makes 46 days. How come?
5. Last Sunday of Lent?
6. To SHRIVE is to?
7. Lent (fr. Lencten) means?
8. When does Easter arrive?
9. Easter season lasts for 50 days - until what church celebration?
10. Color of vestments during Lent?
11. What snacks signify Lent?
12. Which feast day always happens during Lent?
13. Ashes on Ash Wednesday come from?
14. Which acclamation of praise word is not said during Lent?
15. Three places most famous for its Mardi Grass Carnival?

Answers on page 8.

Wednesday Evening Lenten Services

The BLC community and friends are invited to take part in Lenten services on Wednesday evenings at 7 PM, via Zoom. Each service includes, music, scripture, and a reflection by a member of the community on the theme of *Transition*. Participants will also have the opportunity to talk to one another. Our lenten speakers are **Kathy Ziegler, Alan Petty, Dorothy Wagner, Debbie Knudtzon & Mark Knapp**. Make this an important part of your Lenten Journey.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83804899018?pwd=ckF4SnprNHlZT0FIVlhSbVhUbWhaQT09>

Meeting ID: 838 0489 9018

Passcode: 553416

Dial In: 1-669-900-6833

Passcode: 553416#



*Dear Sisters and Brothers at
Bethlehem Lutheran Church,*

*We are so blessed and thankful
for all your prayers, thoughts and
acts of kindness to us in our loss
of our wonderful and loving Stefi.
She has been the mother to several
generations of family and special
friend to family and friends
abroad.*

*I'd like to thank you all for the
many cards, phone calls and
delicious meals brought over to
us. Also some beautiful floral
arrangements have brightened our
home, thanks again!*

*The COVID epidemic has done
a great harm to society and
especially churches and families.
We hope and pray it will soon be
eradicated!*

*With love and thankfulness to all
our family at BLC and a soul felt
presence of God to give strength
and comfort.*

With grateful thanks and prayers,

Don Hux and Family

"God be with us until we meet again!"



Bethlehem's's Lenten Charities

Witness and Service Commission

At Bethlehem we have many opportunities to share what we have with others throughout the year. This is true especially during Lent..

The YWCA of Sonoma County and ELCA World Hunger will be the recipients of our Lenten Offerings. The YWCA of Sonoma County operates the community's ONLY 24/7 Crisis Hotline for victims of domestic violence and provides emergency shelter, advocacy, resources and therapy support. ELCA World Hunger provides immediate relief to those who are hungry, and connects people with the resources they need to produce food and gain access to clean water, education, health care and sources of income, so that long-term, sustainable change can be accomplished.

In your pack of offering envelopes, there is one envelope for each week marked Lenten Offering, which can be filled and sent back to church. If you don't have the envelope pack, just send a check to BLC marked for Lent. You also have the option to make an online offering by going to the church's website and clicking on Giving Options and selecting GivePlus and Lenten Offerings. Please consider making Lenten Offerings this year.

Elisha's Pantry is a partnership with Christ Church United Methodist, Shomrei Torah, and Bethlehem, which distributes food to residents in need in Santa Rosa. The Pantry serves approximately 400 households per month. Depending on size of a household, a minimum of two bags (one filled with fresh produce from Harvest for the Hungry Garden and from the gleaning organization, "Farm to Pantry", and one with dry goods) are placed in the cars driving through the Christ Church parking lot (1717 Yulupa Ave.). Prior to holidays, clients also receive special foods, like turkey, ham, etc.

On the third Thursday of each month, a table filled with Personal items/Essentials is put up. All three congregations bring items donated by their parishioners to this table. Please refer to page 1 for the list of items needed.

F.I.S.H. Food Pantry (Friends In Service Here) is a group of volunteers who operate a food pantry where people can receive free food from 12-2pm Tuesday-Friday. Over 6000 households were served last year. Bethlehem provides non-perishable food items. Needed items include: canned beans, pasta, tomato sauce, tuna, peanut butter, cereal, and rice. Items can be dropped off in the kitchen at church on Wednesdays and Fridays between 9-3.

Redwood Empire Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief organization serving north coastal California, from Sonoma County to the Oregon border. They serve 1 in 6 people struggling with food insecurity. Volunteer shifts are available locally at REFB.org to pack or handout food. All volunteers are required to bring a face covering and will be spaced 6 feet apart. Please refer to page 5 for more information.



Ruth Circle

See you Tuesday, March 9th at 10 a.m.

It's nearly Spring, and time to be outside...at a Ruth Circle meeting!

Circle members and all visitors are invited to share the news of BLC and WELCA, be a part of Leslee Cramer's Bible study, and just spend time with our Bethlehem friends.

We'll be meeting outside on the patio. If it is a bit rainy, we will be safely inside, sitting in a politically correct circle.

Call Elaine, 539.7831, with questions or suggestions. See you soon!

First Sunday Forum

Sunday, March 7 - please join us for our monthly adult forum on the first Sunday of the month at **9 AM**, before church.

Just log in to the link for the worship service. For the first several forums we're going to focus on the pastoral writings of Luther. This Sunday we will focus on Luther's simple way to pray.

We'll *always* be asking how what Luther says applies to our lives today.

Sunday, March 7, 9 AM – Same link as Zoom Church. See you there!





PRETZEL SUNDAY

Pretzel Sunday has been a Bethlehem Lutheran tradition for many years. It highlights the story of a young Italian monk creating pretzels in honor of the season of Lent and as a treat for youngsters who said their prayers during this time.

Please join us on Zoom at 9:00am on March 21st to hear the full story and to share in the enjoyment of eating pretzels together virtually! Use this google form to preorder a free pretzel from Pane di Vero. You can also call the Church office to preorder pretzels. All orders must be submitted by March 14th. Each pretzel will be individually bagged. Pick-up will be on Saturday, March 20th from 10:00am-4:00pm in front of the church.

Pretzel Sunday Order Form

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12XxD1UZrqs_T2AR9u6elCconWit74mcAMmGkgl-e4LY/edit



"God didn't promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without rain, but He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the way."

Treasurer's Report

Beverly Schaap

January 2021

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$25,214	\$25,300	-\$86
Expenses	\$30,341	\$25,394	\$4,947
Net	-\$5,127	-\$94	-\$5,033

YTD 2021

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$25,214	\$25,300	-\$86
Expenses	\$30,341	\$25,394	\$4,947
Net	-\$5,127	-\$94	-\$5,033

Amount needed to meet the budget \$6,216 per week
January \$6,304



Quiz Answers

1. 40
2. Ash Wednesday
3. Holy Saturday (Easter Eve) at sundown
4. Sundays are not counted
5. Palm Sunday
6. To confess one's sins
7. Spring (long days)
8. 1st Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21 (Spring Equinox)
9. Pentecost
10. Purple
11. Pretzels
12. Feast of St. Joseph (Mary's Betrothed)
13. Previous Palm Sunday's burned palm crosses
14. Allelujah
15. Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans, Venice (Italy)



2021 Directories

The BLC 2021 directories have been updated and are available in the Church kitchen. If you would like a directory mailed to your home, please email the Church office, blc@sonic.net. Thanks!

The deadline for the next issue of The Bethlehem Star is **March 26, 2021**.

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.