

BETHEL MESSENGER



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From the Pastor

This has been an amazing summer for Bethel UCC. How can I say that? Well, the parking lot has been resurfaced, carpets have been cleaned, our well water has been tested and is safe, the flowers are beautiful, and redoing the retaining walls is being planned! What is even more amazing is that all this has gone on as the global pandemic has kept us away from church and worshiping online.

How can this be? Faith. At least that's what comes to mind. Faith that this time will come to an end. Faith that Bethel has a future, and maintaining the building speaks of that faith. Most importantly is faith in God, faith strong enough to want to share that faith and to pass it on to the next generation.

On Wednesday I was in the church parking lot and I saw the neighbor's chickens. They reminded me of Christmas Eve and the visit of the Christmas Chicken. The chicken greeted us as we got out of our cars on Christmas Eve and as we left church the chicken had moved to a spot on the railing right outside the door. Then the chicken was there on Christmas morning ready to greet the worshipers!

That reminded me of the Sunday School Christmas Program. Costumed young people acting, singing, and providing special music! A few chuckles and lots of smiles! No matter what chaos occurs during practices, a Christmas Program always turns out perfect.

We hosted a Confirmation Event with Bethlehem and Immanuel UCC churches.

There were so many adults involved in making it happen! The topic was the Three Great Loves- Neighbor, Children, and Earth. Each great love had at least one volunteer coordinating the section on that topic. It was a real show of commitment to our youth. This year Ariana and Addison imposed the ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday.

Then in mid-March things changed. But I have faith, too! Faith that Sunday School will resume and Christmas Programs are in our future. Faith that there will be a Confirmation Service next Spring. Faith that we will make use of the new parking lot and enough feet will travel over the carpets to justify cleaning the carpets again in a couple of years! And I have faith in your faith in God and your commitment to bringing about the Kingdom of God filled with love and justice.

If you have a few minutes take your own trip back through your memories of life at Bethel. I hope it will bring smiles to your face and warmth to your hearts!

Peace, Pastor Diane



Virtual Vacation Bible School

This year Vacation Bible School takes to the computer. In hopes of avoiding spreading the virus we had a choice to make: Do we cancel VBS or do we try something new. Immanuel UCC had already reached out to us about doing VBS together. Mardell met with the teachers and it was decided we would host VBS at Bethel. A theme had already been planned and the dates were set. Then came the Pandemic.

When the opportunity to do a virtual VBS with St. Peter's and Immanuel UCC was offered we had a chance to still have a VBS experience this summer. Rev. Laura Yurs offered to do the Bible Story Lessons with her dog Silas. He is a very mellow fellow. She can dress him up and he does not object. Her husband, Rev. Chris Ross of St. Peter's helped with the videos. She joked that it was easier to control Silas than Rev. Ross.

We had a wonderful response- when a request for donations went out many of you stepped forward and made donations! So many that there was no need to charge a fee for VBS as many churches are now doing. Bonnie, Hannah, and Julia Ziegler put in hours of time in the preparation of crafts and snacks. Bonnie was a great source of ideas she was able to find on the internet. Brandon and Cody Cayemberg helped to pack up craft bags. Then on Saturday Judy Zimmermann, Bonnie, Hannah, Julia and I packed up 82 VBS bags with 6 crafts and snacks.

None of this would have been possible without the support and efforts of so many of you! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

**Speaking of Thank You ...**

During this unusual time, we have many people to thank. You continue support Bethel both financially and in numerous actions that help keep the building in fine shape.

Thank
You!



Dennis and Carol Roethel washed the windows even though the church clean-up was cancelled. Thank you.

The lawn at church and the Cemetery are kept well-manicured by a group of dedicated men (and some of their wives). Thank you.

The Consistory picks up the mail, pays the bills, checks on the building, and continues to conduct the business of the church. Thank you.

Cindy Meyer sends out our newsletters and mid-week paper updates. Thank you.

Ken (and Carol Matzdorf) get out the mid-week updates and Zoom worship invitations each week. Ken continues to offer Script. Thank you.

Crystal continues to keep the building clean. It is good to have someone checking up on the building and she does that as she cleans. Thank you.

Mardell and Steve prepared 75 kits to make crosses. We will share those with Immanuel and St. Peter's so the Sunday School will have a project ready for the fall.

Speaking of the Fall

Both the Consistory and the Sunday School teachers will meet in August to discuss the fall schedule. At this time we are experiencing a rapid rise in the number of cases of Covid-19. Each afternoon I receive a computer copy of Sheboygan County Health Department's daily report. I also meet electronically with Rev. Jane Anderson, Associate Conference Minister and other pastors from the Northeast Association. The Wisconsin Conference sends updates and is working with the Wisconsin Council of Churches to determine best practices.

I am sure you have heard of other area churches that have returned to worshiping in their buildings. I listen carefully to what they are doing in hopes that we can apply the same process to Bethel and do it safely! Please consider that we are a small enough congregation that the number of people at a worship service should allow us to practice social distancing.

But there will be changes from the experience we have come to know and love as "church." We will not be able to shake hands, hug, or congregate before and after worship. *** We will ask that members wear masks. *** We will not be able to sing. Some churches allow closed mouth humming. *** We will not be able to share Communion. (At least not pew Communion distributed by Consistory members.)

We will keep you informed as our plan is drafted for meeting together in the Sanctuary.

Outdoor Worship

The Raffle Drawing gave us a chance to practice gathering in the parking lot. SOOOO-- - we are going to try a **Parking Lot Worship on August 23rd**.

It will be at 9:30 and those of you who have good connections with God and the weather people please start praying now for good weather. We will Social Distance and Wear Masks. Families and friends who have been together during this time can sit together. BUT, sadly, the rest of us need to stay at least 6 feet apart. A decision on cancelling for bad weather will be made soon enough that you will receive a call if the weather requires a cancellation. Hoping to see you on the 23rd!
Pastor Diane



Consistory Minutes

July 14, 2020

Members Present: Dennis Roethel, Mary Johnston, Patte Puetz, Steve Blohm, Kris Dirks, Lenora Stuckmann, Pastor Diane Cayemberg

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm and Pastor Diane opened with a prayer.



The minutes from June were reviewed. There was a motion (Patte/Mary) to approve the secretary minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

The treasurer reports from last month were reviewed. Kris noted that she was still waiting on a bill from the pension board for last month, so we will probably see the payment twice this upcoming month. We also paid the water test bill, and shortly after they came to test, even though they shared they may not be able to right away with COVID. Kris also paid the second half of the driveway bill, so we will see that deducted in the month of July. The market value is starting to come back on our memorial funds; however, there is nothing new to report there. There are not any changes to the building report as well. There was a motion (Kris/Steve) to approve all treasurer reports, and the motion carried unanimously.

Pastors Report

- Cindy is mailing out the midweek updates for Pastor Diane.
- June 23rd there was a planning meeting for vacation bible school. The group will be recording instructions for the crafts on July 15th, and then assembling the bags with all the craft materials on July 16th. The 20th the members of Immanuel and St. Peter's are picking up their bags and Pastor Diane will deliver the bags for our members. The church members were very generous with their donations to help make these bags.

- June 24th the United Church men and Women had a telephone meeting. There may still be a banquet at Lakeland University on October 15th. If not the scholarships may have to be done virtually. They are planning to expand their scholarships to the students wanting to become chaplains.
- June 26th there was a cemetery funeral for Colleen Pfeifer.
- Pastor Diane is remembering that once we open back up we will need to have a church funeral for Marilyn Spindler.
- The representative to test our water came to church on July 8th. They stated that our air intake pipe was the cleanest he has ever seen.
- On Sunday, Pastor Diane plans to share a video of the story of Amazing Grace and play a video of people all around the world singing it in their own language.

Old Business

- Dennis contacted Georgia Pacific, U-line and Professional Supply to order hand sanitizer. All of these places are secondary to the hospitals and clinics and Dennis could not get an answer of when we will be able to get some. Steve is working on the stands for the sanitizer and they are almost done.
- The carpet cleaning will happen tomorrow, everything except the meeting room and the fellowship hall will be cleaned.
- The landscaping is scheduled to happen in August. Dennis noticed that the ditch is very wet this year. Steve mentioned that it might be because our drive way is pitched different since being redone. If we were going to fill the ditch in with rocks, we would need permission to do so.

New Business

- Pam Raquet called to ask the consistory's opinion on Chili Supper this year. We would need three people who are certified with food handling licenses and we would need an inspector at church. With all the work that it would be to run this year, and we would not be able to seat any people and have only to-go orders, it would probably be best to skip this year. We will wait to officially decide, as things can change very quickly. The other thing we will need to keep in mind is if we do apple pie sales this year.
- Karen Reagan joined the meeting to discuss opening the church as she works at a hospital. Pastor Diane shared that Immanuel and St. Peter's in Kiel are also meeting this week to discuss how they should open. There are churches in the area who are already opened and others who are remaining closed. In the churches that are open, social distancing and masks are required. Hand sanitizer is also available for members to use. If we were to open, we would probably have one person distributing the sanitizer as we do not have a stand or pump just yet. If we decide to open, we will need to remove all hymnals and everything else from the pews and offering will likely occur with a plate in the back of church for people to leave their offerings before or after service. The churches that are open do have communion but they only will serve one family at a time and sanitize in between. To keep the spread down, we will not be able to pass the peace, sing or congregate in the building after service. Karen does not believe we would have to sanitize the church after service because the virus

can only live on surfaces for a few hours. We decided to table this decision until next month, so we can see what other churches are doing as well as schools because we will need to know our plan for Sunday School once we open as well.

- Pastor Diane suggested doing an outdoor church service, weather permitting, on August 23rd. This would be in the parking lot with the speaker we used for the raffle.
- Pastor Diane also mentioned that Nicole Herda, a recent Lakeland Graduate, was going to need somewhere to practice different parts of a service soon, so she asked if we were ok with volunteering to help. We all thought that would be ok, and we are open to helping her.
- Dennis shared our LP contract is up for renewal. Last year, we stayed with Weber as we thought all other companies would charge us about the same. We do own our own tank, and it holds 500 gallons of LP and it is currently 80% full. The rate we were given from Weber is the same as last year. Dennis asked the Country Visions Co-op for a quote and for around 2000 gallons a year our cost would be \$1.059 and we needed to make a decision by July 31st. There was a motion (Kris/Steve) to sign a contract with the Country Visions Co-Op for our LP contract this year.

There was a motion (Patte/Steve) to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lenora Stuckmann