



Lenten Series: Embracing Sabbath

The antidote to exhaustion is not rest, it's wholeheartedness. ~ David Whyte

Our Lenten theme is **Embracing Sabbath**, and we will be joined by area preachers on Wednesday nights as we gather to worship, and to be refreshed and renewed. **Each of our Wednesday night worship services will be at 6:15 in the sanctuary.**

My hope and prayer for our time together in this Lenten season is that you will find worship a respite in your busy life. That the heavy burdens and weariness that we carry with us might be lifted, and Christ's Spirit might refresh us and renew us as we come together. As we gather to sing and pray these Lenten Wednesdays, may we be reminded there is a better way, another way, and that Christ is leading us.

March 2

Ash Wednesday ~ Embracing Sabbath—Pr. Jay

March 9

Sabbath Connects Us to Community—Pr. Jay

March 16

Sabbath Offers Us a Whole-Hearted Life—Pr. Trish Reedstrom, Messiah, North Mankato

March 23

Sabbath Releases Us from Our Anxieties—Vicar Dave Reedstrom, Calvary, Rapidan

March 30

Sabbath Connects Us to Our Created Selves—Pr. Janet Adams, Trinity, Madelia

April 6

Sabbath Offers Us the Holiness of Time—Pr. John Odegard, Grace, Mankato



Thank You

I can never say thanks enough for your faithfulness in serving and giving. For the fourth year in a row, we finished the year with a positive general fund balance. You are amazing, Bethlehem, in sharing what God has given you.

~ Pr. Jay



Free meals are served from 5-6:15 p.m. on Wednesdays.

March 2:

Fish, wild rice blend, mixed veggies

March 9:

Pork roast, mashed potatoes & gravy, carrots

March 16:

Baked chicken, scalloped potatoes, corn

March 23:

California burger, potato salad, chips

March 30:

Hot dog or brat, kraut, baked beans, chips

Menus subject to change based on availability.



ADULT FORUM SCHEDULE
10:45AM, SUNDAYS

Feb. 27: Greater Mankato United Way with Community & Global Missions Board

Mar. 6: Legacy Giving with the Stewardship Board

Mar. 13: Connections Ministry with Prs. Collette & Erica

Mar. 20: Meet the Pastors with Prs. Jay & Kristen

Mar. 27: Global Health Ministries with Community & Global Missions Board





Help us support individuals and families experiencing homelessness by donating to Bethlehem's March monthly mission -- **Connections**. Connections extends a welcome that provides dignity, shelter, and community to those with a need. Connections shelter is a low-barrier emergency shelter. They house men, women, and families and have a 35-bed capacity. The shelter is open from 6 p.m.-8 a.m. daily; intake is from 6-6:30 p.m. A meal is served nightly. Many volunteer opportunities are also offered, so consider offering your time as well as giving monetarily. Our goal is \$3,000.



The Office of the Bishop at the SEMN Synod is asking for 15-20 adult volunteers to assist them at the 2022 SEMN Synod Assembly. **When:** Saturday, May 7, from 7 a.m.-11 a.m. **What:** Registration table volunteers and helping hand volunteers (directing folks to bathrooms, display tables, etc.). **Where:** Mayo Clinic Event Center, Mankato, MN. We humbly offer a box lunch to enjoy after your service. Please contact Reverend Barb Streed at streed@semnsynod.org if you can help. **Please respond by March 1, 2022.**



The Call Committee met on 2/10 to work on the first draft of our Ministry Site Profile (MSP). We hosted the Adult Forum on 2/20 and provided insight into the call process, our progress, and what to expect in the near future. We also conducted a short survey to those in attendance; the survey will also be decimated to the congregation through all of our various church communications so that everyone has a chance to participate. Our next meeting date is March 6. The Call Committee has a mailbox in the church office, and we encourage all who have questions or concerns to reach out to us.

Endowment Board Update

Soon the Endowment Board will be accepting scholarship applications from high school seniors and college students working on their undergraduate degrees. **Applications will be due by May 1** again this year. Watch for announcements.

The Bethlehem Endowment Fund started in 1983. It is a fund separate from all other congregation funds. Through the years, many people have contributed legacy gifts, memorial money, and donations. Because the principal has grown and is not spent, the interest income has also increased. Following the Fund's own bylaws, the Endowment Board determines where to share that growth income. Many charitable organizations, mission projects, and college students have received help from the Endowment Fund.

Contact Susan Brown (507-387-2976) if you have ideas for disbursements OR if you are interested in serving on the Board.



Here are the "highlights" of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **February 15**. Meeting minutes with details are posted at www.blemankato.org and are also available in the church office notebook. Visit with Council members with questions and concerns! We welcome your conversation & feedback!

Financial Report: December 31 general fund balance to end the fiscal year was confirmed at a **positive** \$2,180.70. January 31 balance still being finalized. **Flags in the Sanctuary**

Conversation: Discussion held on issues and opinions shared at 1/16 adult forum. Decision tabled to 3/15 Council meeting for more discussion of possible options and involvement of full Council membership. Stay tuned! **BLC COVID Plan**

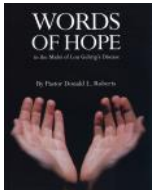
Update: No changes planned in mask requirement due to continued area high rate of transmissions. CDC recommends continued mask wearing in this situation. Ash Wednesday procedures to return to normal. No communion changes planned at this time. **LSS Lease Renewal:** Current 10-year lease expires August 31. Given pandemic impact leading to limited use of all office space, LSS has requested a renewed lease for one year to consider future needs. Council approved this request with intent for further discussion with LSS at start of 2023 regarding long-term plans. **Personnel:** Personnel Committee discussing development of lay staff compensation model. **Synod Assembly:** Saturday, May 7 assembly to be held in Mankato at Mayo Civic Center. BLC entitled to 3 delegates. Contact Bob Ihrig if interested in attending. Marian Mallory & Bob have communicated interest. Council to confirm in March. Synod also requires local volunteers to facilitate assembly activities. Contact Emily in office for details. We need YOU! **40 Together Synod Lenten Initiative:** Council approved \$1,500 from undesignated memorials to support synod Lenten initiative for global ministries in Colombia, Mexico, & Tanzania. **Lenten & Easter Services:** BLC will collaborate with other local congregations to share pastors for Wednesday services focusing on Sabbath theme. Plans for 1 Easter service. **Call Committee:** Progress continues in preparing for call of new associate pastor this summer. Site profile being completed. Adult forum scheduled on Sunday, February 20 to provide update & complete survey on pastoral priorities. **Strategic Planning:** Day of Norms event held on 2/6 with positive feedback. Community leaders being interviewed by team. Goals being developed for Council review/recommendation. **Capital Campaign:** Stewardship Board to interview 2 firms on 2/22 to lead capital campaign. **Building Safety Meeting:** Mankato public safety representatives will present information & recommendations for enhanced building safety procedures. Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 30 from 3-4:30 p.m. Staff, ushers, Council members & interested BLC members invited. **Refugee Resettlement:** BLC discussing with 3 other local churches collaborative sponsorship of a refugee family. Synod is providing information and advice. **New Member:** Julie Missal approved as new BLC member. Welcome, Julie! **Nominations:** Nominations process for Council, board & committee members taking place. Need to fill 24 positions. Contact Bob Ihrig if interested in serving the church. **Next Council Meeting:** Tuesday, March 15.





Pastor Don's Devotion

Pastor Don Roberts served as pastor from 1989-1996. He was diagnosed with ALS in 1995, and continues to be an inspiration of life & faith to our congregation.



It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. ~ Deuteronomy 21:8

Moses' commission to Joshua was to lead the Israelites to the promised land. Moses promised that God would go before Joshua. Moses was right. That is true for us today as well. The risen Christ goes before us and is with us in the present moment. "...He himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5b) The risen Christ is with us, whatever we are going through. He is with us in the courtroom and when we are in the process of a divorce. He is with us in the ICU. He is with us no matter what we are going through. He does not practice "social distancing." Henri Nowen said, "Our suffering is God's suffering." God loves us so much that our suffering is his suffering.

God will not forsake us. God did not forsake Joshua and the Israelites. It is the same for us. Sometimes we doubt this. I have had ALS for 27 years. Sometimes I doubt God's faithfulness. We all have life circumstances where we doubt God's faithfulness. Let's go deeper. Jesus died for us, even though he could have avoided it. He loves us so much that he died for us. No matter what we are going through, he promises us a glorious future with him. ***Thanks be to God!***



FAMILY FAITH FORMATION UPDATES

Notes from Anna Wencl, Family Faith Formation Director

COMMUNION MILESTONE CLASS

w/ Pastor Jay & Anna

SUNDAY, MARCH 27TH | 12-3 PM

This class is geared toward 4th graders and a parent, but older children who haven't yet received communion are welcome, too. Pizza lunch is included. Visit blcmankato.org/children to register by March 1st.

We are working with Artifact to paint communion cups together, so we need a count earlier than usual.



Liturgies for March

March 2

Ash Wednesday ~ John 10:1-18

March 6

ELW #10 ~ John 11:1-44

March 9

Holden



March 13

BLC Praise Band ~ John 13:1-17

March 16

Praise with Joe & Missy
Jeremiah 29:1, 5-7, 10-14

March 20

Gather ~ John 18:12-27

March 23

Service of the Word



March 27

ELW #1
John 18:28-40

March 30

Holden



UPCOMING

Wednesday Milestone CLASSES

MARCH 9TH: 3RD & 4TH GRADE - DEEP BLUE BIBLE (7 PM)

MARCH 16TH: 1ST & 2ND GRADE - LORD'S PRAYER (7 PM)

MARCH 23RD: KINDERGARTEN - 10 COMMANDMENTS (5:45 PM)

Join Pastor Kristen and/or Miss Anna on Wednesday evenings as we explore these important faith topics with a grown-up! Let us know you're coming by registering at blcmankato.org/youth by the Sunday prior to each class.



PALM SUNDAY

Worship led by Children & Youth

SUNDAY, APRIL 10TH

Kids & youth will be working during Lent to plan and lead a wonderful service. You'll want to be a part of it!



Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

(507) 388-2925
blchurch@blcmankato.org



*A Reconciling in Christ
Congregation*

Pastor Jay Dahlvang: (507) 469-3792
pastorjay@blcmankato.org

Pastor Kristen Venne: (507) 995-2467
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Church Calendar-Winter 2022				
WORSHIP TIMES Sunday, 9:30am Wednesday, 6:15pm Sanctuary & Online ONLINE SERVICE WILL BE STREAMED LIVE ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE & PLAYED ON KTOE RADIO AT 11AM.	EDUCATION Sunday, 10:45am • Adult Forum • LIGHT (preK-4th) Wednesday, 7pm • NightLIGHT (preK-4th) • TorchLIGHT (5th-6th) • Confirmation (7th-9th)	BIBLE STUDY Tuesday, 7:00am • Lectionary, online Wednesday, 10:30am • Book of Faith, guided study Facebook Devo w/ Pastors, varies • Online Group	SMALL GROUPS (BOOK CLUBS, MUSIC, SOCIAL GROUPS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, ETC.) Check full calendar for times/places.	FELLOWSHIP WITH FOOD Sunday, 10:30am • Coffee & treats after worship Wednesday, 5pm • FREE Community Meal until 6:15pm • Give as you're able • Menu on website

All Calendar details can be found on the website at blcmankato.org/calendar.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

*Bethlehem is an inviting community that is growing in Christ,
loving our neighbors, and serving God's world.*

The deadline for submitting newsletter articles is the 15th of each month.

MARCH 13 2022
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS

CLOCKS MOVE UP ONE HOUR