

BETHEL NEWSLETTER

April 2009

Reaching Out – Praying, Caring, Sharing

Holdrege, Nebraska

Holy Week and Life

The journey of Holy Week is the journey of real life. That is a fact we need to hold near and dear to our hearts. That is why it is so important for each of us as followers of Jesus to be present for all of the worship opportunities of this special week. Otherwise there will be a distortion about our faith and living in the real world. Let us walk through the events of that week with Jesus and his disciples to see what I mean.



HOLY WEEK

On Palm Sunday Jesus rides triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey. There was cheering and celebrating that this one would be the “Promised One,” who would free God’s people from their oppressors. Who wouldn’t want to be a part of that scene? Who wouldn’t want to cheer on the eventual freedom fighter? Don’t we buy easily into that picture today? Don’t we want to be identified with a winner? We are willing to get on board with anyone who we perceive to get us out of the life messes we find ourselves in. That theme of worship is attractive.

Then comes Maundy Thursday and the sharing of a special meal. Well it is not Palm Sunday but it is special because of the invitation to join others at our Lord’s invitation. Who doesn’t like to be invited to go out for a time of eating and fellowship? The disciples I’m sure were glad to share this occasion with their master. We too find it a very meaningful time to receive the meal our Lord has prepared for us. Usually attendance for this service is good.

Then comes Good Friday. Time to run like those first disciples did. They were left in despair. All their hopes in following Jesus were now in shambles. Their Lord was publically humiliated, hanging on a cross. Their futures were thrown into chaos. It was best to not hang around and be seen as followers of Jesus. They abandoned hope and locked themselves in a room.

That is so true of us as well. When our hopes and dreams get shattered, we too often run

away from God. We try to figure out for ourselves what to do next. Sometimes we even give up on God thinking evil has won the day. We feel alone and helpless to continue our journeys. We don’t know where to turn next. I have seen this happen to followers of Jesus when adversity strikes. The tendency is to close ourselves off, struggling with our faith. The Good Friday service is one we would just as soon avoid and most people do. It is a part of the journey that makes us uncomfortable.

That lasts for a while too. I can imagine how difficult it was for those first disciples those few days until Easter. I can imagine the fear and the confusion they felt. I can imagine how hopeless it must have seemed for them. Their lives were out of control. Isn’t that true for us also, to go through dark days not knowing when or if they will end. There are questions regarding our faith. Has it been all for naught? Where is the victory we desire?

Then comes the greatest of all news. Jesus has risen from the dead! Easter is a day to celebrate the victory of life over death. The faith of the disciples was restored. God was doing a wonderful thing that made no sense to the world. We too want to be a part of this celebration. Easter is a time for God’s people to come and rejoice together in the certain hope that is ours. The story truly has a happy ending.

That is God’s story and also the story of our life journeys. Thanks be to God that we can know God is part of each of those aspects of our daily lives, be they dark or bright ones. Let us join in worship each of the Holy Week services to be nurtured in our life journeys, to know God is present with us no matter where they may lead.

Be renewed in your journey,
Pastor David Sites

“Speak kind words and you will hear kind echoes.”
-Bahn

I have struggled for several days to write an article for the April Bethel Newsletter. As I read this article I feel it is extremely inadequate of what I want to say to each of you, who will read this

most importantly, because we love and follow Christ. It is not only what we do; it is who we are.

We have no mission but to serve
In full obedience to our Lord
To care for all, without reserve,
And spread his liberating Word.
(Fred Pratt Green, ELW #729, v5)

Intern Margaret Jacobus

Camp Noah

The Bethel Church is putting together a team to go to Iowa and present Camp Noah from June 21-27th. We would like to have at least 12 team members. Prayerfully consider being a part of this team. We need some young people ages 14 and up and both men and women to be a part of this group. We will meet together to plan our course and decide on activities. When we have the exact location we will know what supplies and bedding to bring. This is a great team to be a part of this summer! Your cost is for some meals. This is a unique experience for both team members and participants. Contact Connie Jacobson, 308-995-5563, lcjacobson@atcjet.net, or the church office.



GOLD STAR AWARD

I wish I could fill a basket full of "Gold Stars." Bethel is blessed by wonderful people who serve in so many ways. One such group is the Bethel Lutheran Senior High Youth & Family Committee. Shelley Gray, Gayleen Maurer, Linda Hansen, Kirk Ronhovde and Lonnie DeJonge are the adult members of this committee. Each High school youth is considered to be part of our committee. The Gold Star is for all adult and youth who organized and presented "Huskers Rock'n the Heart!" program on Sunday, March 1st. Doing something to perfection is always a goal in anything that we attempt. This group of adults and youth reached the pinnacle of "perfection" in their work and efforts on March 1st. **Thank you!!**

AS A PLACE OF GRACE WE **PRAY** for each other as members and friends of this congregation:

April 5, 2009

Robert & Renee Nelson
Ronald Nelson
Brian & Shelley Gray
Amanda, Michaela, Zachary

April 12, 2009

Elaine Norman
Mary Norman
Marcellus & Jean Larson

April 19, 2009

Burthor & Ruth Larson
Naomi Nelson
Carroll Landstrom

April 26, 2009

Stephen & Dana Kness
Jarad
Elliott & Carolyn Olesen
Larry & Joane Olson

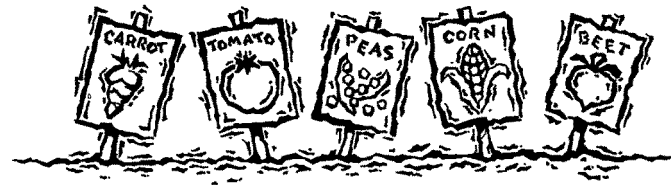
The Call to Discipleship Task Force is continually exploring ways for members of Bethel to find their way to mission in our Lord's name. We work on the premise that we of the Bethel Family are a wonderfully diversified group with different talents and different preferences for giving of our time and possessions. Not everyone is encouraged by every project that we bring to you. That is why we present to the congregation a wide range of mission projects. It is our hope and prayer that we can find mission projects that will appeal to some of our members, some of the time. It is "our mission" to engage each and every one of us in God's work.

Over the last couple of years we have discussed, on several occasions, how we can share our abundance. Many times we have more of something that we need, but no convenient method of distribution to those who could use what we have.

Last autumn was of particular concern when we thought of the produce that was going to waste in people's gardens at a time when the food pantry, for example, would have welcomed fresh fruits or

vegetables. Perhaps, there are folks within our congregation could have used this hardy resource.

To garden is to open your heart to the sky. The task force is investigating some of the ways that we might turn gardening into local mission projects. We are asking you if there is any interest in the organization of a Bethel "Community Garden". We have done nothing to energize this project except to gather information about how to help make this endeavor a success. What we need now is for some people to step forward. We are not



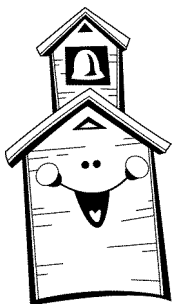
going to direct this project in any particular direction. This would be for the group to decide. However, the task force does feel that this could be a faith growing experience for anyone who would like to grow your food and possibly share the bounty with those in need. If there are any of us that are of the "Master Gardener" rank, this would be a wonderful opportunity to allow the Holy Spirit to move you to action. We await your decision. You can contact anyone on the task force. Members of the Call to Discipleship Task Force are:

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|--------------------|----------|
| Pastor David Sites | 995-8388 |
| Dr. Stuart Embury | 995-4053 |
| Russell Edeal | 876-2417 |
| Chris Erickson | 995-8421 |
| Daren Englund | 876-2150 |
| Earl Root | 995-4506 |

Peace be with you.

Call to Discipleship Task Force

TUTORING TOTS PRESCHOOL



The Tutoring Tots Board met on Tuesday, March. 17. The following items were discussed:

1. A class for three-year-olds will be offered next year with Terry Tidyman teaching.
2. Preschool graduation is set for May 14th at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

3. Will work with the Christian Education Committee to plan a "Preschool Sunday" next September. Plans are tentative to serve Sunday AM coffee, a donation "apple tree", and introduction of the teachers to the congregation.
4. Guidelines for the preschool scholarships will be defined.
5. Last day of preschool is May 13th.

Teri Jorges
Preschool Director

Council Corner

Worship and Music Committee Chair, Mary Root, reported that with the assistance of the sound system task force suggestions to improve and update the current system are prepared. The Council approved the report and scheduled an informational meeting for Sunday, March 29th after the worship service. On April 19th, a congregational vote will happen at 10:00am between the worship services. Please come for both events concerning the sound system.

The executive Committee led a discussion of the Nebraska Synod Capital Campaign for Leadership and Youth. The council voted to lead Bethel members in participation the Leadership and Youth Campaign beginning in the Fall of 2009.

Pastor Sites announced that a new intern has been assigned to Bethel for 2009-2010.

Property Committee Chair, Ron Hein, asked for all members to be a part of the Spring Work Day is April 4th.

Russ Edeal
Parish Planning Council Chairman

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! **Annual Palm Sunday Dinner April 5th.**

Bring your family and join us for dinner following the 11:00 a.m. worship service.

A freewill offering will be taken. All proceeds go to Bethel's youth for church camp and college scholarships.

Scholarship and Grant Committee

Worship & Music

Sound & Video System

Bethel members, our journey began three months ago when a Task Force was formed to evaluate our audio/video system. The Task Force has made their recommendation for this project and it was presented to the Parish Planning Council at the March meeting. The council has approved this sound and video system replacement and a congregation vote will be taken on April 19, 2009 at 10:00 A.M.

The Task Force did an excellent job of gathering the information for us and should be commended for their work; they are Ellie Keller, Sylvia Person, Karen Daffer, Barry Daffer, Mary Hock, Andy Ohlson, Karl Boutwell and Ron Hein.

Some of the requirements for the new sound system are:

1. Basic sound system with excellent voice clarity.
2. Video/DVD recording of worship services and other special events.
3. Digitize sermons for website.
4. New sound system in Fellowship Hall.
5. A system which is easy to operate.
6. Amplification of the clavinova and organ music.
7. Relocation of Media Control Center.

The following is the final proposal for our new system from Pallas in Kearney NE to be installed by July 1, 2009.

- The sanctuary system and fellowship hall
- Video recording system
- Roll top rack which will house the system
- Build and install a new media control center located in the back of the sanctuary
- Laptop computer
- Install a dedicated electrical power circuit

Folks hold on to your hats! Now our next objective is: How do we fund this Sound System. The answer is with our prayers and determination We can all experience being a part of this venture.

Yours O Lord is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty, for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours. I know that by the power of Your Spirit all things are possible. I give you thanks.

Worship and Music Committee
Mary Root, Chairperson

Save Your Vision

Good health is an important part of good vision. The healthier you are, the better chance you have of avoiding risks to your eyes. Some things that you can do to lower your risk of eye disease and vision loss are: Avoid smoking, Eat healthy foods, Stay active, Control your blood pressure, and Protect your eyes from the sun.

Smoking contributes to many health problems including vision. This is why it is important to educate our youth about the dangers of smoking. If you already smoke, quitting can have many good effects on your health. Smoking increases your risk of developing: Age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, and glaucoma.

Eating healthy foods is also important to good eye health. Lifelong good nutrition may lower your risk of some eye diseases. A healthy, balanced diet gives you a better chance of staying healthy and keeping your eyes healthy.

Staying active is part of a healthy lifestyle that can improve your overall health. Exercising regularly can reduce your risk of developing problems that can lead to eye disease. Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

It is a good idea to control your blood pressure for your heart. It is also a good idea for protecting your eyesight. High blood pressure can increase your risk for glaucoma. It may also increase your risk for diabetic retinopathy if you have diabetes.

Another important part of good eye care is to protect your eyes from the sun. You should wear protective sunglasses to protect your eyes from the ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun. UV rays may be related to some eye diseases later in life, such as macular degeneration, cataracts and even skin cancer around the eyelids. They can also cause

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corneal sunburn, called photokeratitis, which can lead to temporary vision loss. Everyone who spends time outdoors (including children) should wear sunglasses and a wide brimmed hat. Your sunglasses should fit well and be able to absorb 99-100% of both UV-A and UV-B rays.

For more information on taking care of your eye sight, call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020 or contact them on line.

News from Nathan Metzger

Dear Members of Bethel Lutheran Church,
Sisters and Brothers in Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

I write to you this evening with news: Kim continues to recover well from her surgery. She is occasionally sore, but she can walk and run as if nothing ever happened. She's still working at Pier 1 Imports, selling furniture. Last month she won the in-store prize for most sales on the Pier 1 card.

In other news: Jonah continues to grow. His vocabulary is continuing to grow, though he sticks to one-syllable words as much as possible. He got his first pair of water boots about two weeks ago, and they have become his favorite set of footwear. He likes to go to the YMCA here in Dubuque to play with the cars and the blocks, and he's figured out how to climb onto his changing table by himself.

In still other news: as you know, I finished classes at Wartburg on December 12, 2008. The South Dakota Synod candidacy committee gave me their final approval for ordination at their January meeting. Roughly two weeks ago I received a memo from the president of Wartburg Theological Seminary informing me that I have been assigned to Region 4 of the ELCA. (Region 4 encompasses Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and part of Louisiana.)

On Thursday, March 5, the Conference of Bishops met to finalize the assignment, and our new bishop took time to call his newly assigned seminarians. Bishop David deFreese welcomed us to the Nebraska Synod, ELCA! So it is with great joy that write to tell you the Metzgers are Huskers again! We'll be meeting with the synod staff soon to begin exploring some first call possibilities and see where the Spirit moves.

And that is our news for now. By God's good grace, the next letter I write to you will include an ordination announcement!

May God's calling during this Lenten season lead you all to tremendous Easter joy!
In Christ,

Nathan Metzger



Served by the Senior High Youth Easter Sunday immediately following the Sunrise Service!

The menu is Easter egg casserole, homemade cinnamon rolls, fruit cup, juice and coffee. Please join the youth for good food and fellowship!!

A freewill offering will be accepted (there will be matching funds from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans®).

We are looking forward to YOU being our guest for the Easter Morning Breakfast.

NOTICE to all college students:

The newly revised scholarship form is now available to download from Bethel's web site <http://www.bethel-lutheran-church.com> The form may also be picked up in the church office.

All college students wishing to receive this grant must apply each year. The policies for this grant are included with the form. High School seniors will be mailed a form in April.

Bethel's Spring Work Day

The Spring Work Day at Bethel is scheduled for Saturday, April 4th. There is work to be done throughout the church including rooms that are used for functions that fall into various committees' areas of responsibility. There will work available for every one of all ages and skills. Please put the date on your calendar and plan to pitch-in for all or part of the day. We will start at 9:30 a.m. with a noon lunch being served. Brian Gray (995-2775) is leading this project.

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'" -Erma Bombeck



Have you visited Bethel's web site? If not, please check it out. It is being updated and kept current by our web master, Sylvia Person. If there is something you would like on the web site, please contact Sylvia at 995-6488.

www.bethel-lutheran-church.com

The Staff of Bethel Lutheran Church works as a Team, with defined roles and responsibilities to support and advance Bethel's Vision and Mission. We work as a cohesive, supportive Team, with an effective communication process that enhances our ability to provide cost effective service, administration and support to (for) the Congregation and its mission.