



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

17529 15th AVE NE
Shoreline, WA 98155
206-362-4334
info@bethel4all.org
bethel4all.org

Bethel Lutheran Church

April 2020



Grace to you and peace from God our Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ.

My siblings in Christ, we can't flee from it. The COVID-19 is spreading globally and the impact is already staggering and in the United States this disease brings fear of the economic downfall of our country. Perhaps because of this fear last Tuesday, March 24, President Trump called for end of our life-saving physical distancing by this Easter.

A dear friend of mine invited me to re-read Exodus 5-7 about the plagues in Egypt and there I read that the Pharaoh refused to listen to wisdom and cared only about money and keep using people to work hard for his wealth.

In our baptism we are called to live our life as God's beloved children who are not afraid especially of the COVID-19 – or any disease – more than we fear, love and trust in God. We know that fear is separating us but love is keeping us together. It is in this love we trust the Holy Spirit holding us together in Spirit.

This Easter our church will be empty like the tomb that was empty and God's Love will be unleashed in the hearts of all of us willing to bring safety and comfort that could help even just one neighbor by staying home.

For us, by staying home – even when it's not easy – we will celebrate the triumph of selfless, all-conquering love for Christ's death paid the price for our sins so that as we "patiently await" our physical death, we wait with the hope of the resurrection.

So, my siblings in Christ, we will celebrate Easter as we are waiting for this pandemic to end because we already know that God's forgiveness has broke down the power of death and we are celebrating this joyfully every Sundays to come remotely in our homes.

Blessings to all of you.

Bethel News

Remote Worship and Prayer schedule

10:00 am daily common prayer will occur Tuesday - Friday mornings on Facebook live

3:00 pm daily common prayer will occur Tuesday - Thursday afternoons on Facebook live

April 5 at 9:30 am Bethel's Sunday service will be broadcast via Facebook live.

Holy Week

We will be working with the Synod which has been working hard to plan remote services for Holy Week.

From the synod website:

In response to our inability to gather for in-person worship in the weeks to come, a team of rostered ministers from our synod is producing online worship for Holy Week and Easter. We offer them for your use, however you see fit. They are intended to be a supplement for your local worship expression, to help lighten your load and remind us that we are still united as the Body of Christ. In order to aid your planning, we're letting you know now! These pre-recorded worship videos will be published to the Synod YouTube channel, with bulletins and links sent out via email. Each service will incorporate lay and rostered ministers from around our synod, striving to be representative of the diversity among us. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact the appropriate liturgists. May your worship, in all forms, be Spirit filled.

Seven Last Words for Good Friday

Liturgists: Reverends Jana Schofield, Deanna Wildermuth, and Elizabeth Rawlings

Easter Vigil for Holy Saturday

Liturgists: Reverends Priscilla Austin and Anna Rieke

Service of the Word for Easter Sunday

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee preaching; Liturgists: Reverends Laura Harris-Ferree, Paul Eldred, Deanna Wildermuth, Andy Arnold, and Andy Yee

Stay tuned for updates from Bethel and Pastor Diakonda about how we will engage with the synods Holy Week services and resources together.

Bethel News Continued

Bethel Lutheran Church Women

The Bethel Lutheran Church Women are sad to announce they will be canceling the Spring Luncheon for the time being. With all the uncertainty at this time, it is challenging to plan an event like the luncheon. We all look forward to when we can gather together again and plan future events.

Volunteers Needed

Pastor Diakonda is looking for volunteers to lead the 10:00 am and 3:00 pm common prayers. All you need is an Internet enabled device with a camera and microphone like a smart phone. If you are interested in leading a common prayer contact Siobhan via phone or email. She will explain how to go live and face-book and she will send you the prayers to read.

Church Closure Update

At the March council meeting, the council voted to close the church building beginning on March 16, 2020 through at least April 13, 2020, to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect both Bethel members and our broader community.

On March 30, the council communicated over email to check-in about that decision. We are still in turbulent time with few answers and it is therefore necessary to continue to keep the building closed for the time being.

The council will continue to monitor the news and the advice from the department of health and CDC so that when it is safe to open the building and gather together in person again we will do so.

With the recent "Stay Home Stay Healthy" order in Washington, the Bethel office is also closed. Both Siobhan and Pastor Diakonda are available via email and calls to the church office phone are being forwarded directly to Siobhan's cell phone.

Check our website or Facebook for updates! We hope everyone is staying healthy and safe and we so look forward to being able to see one another and worship together again in the future.

Tom and Mary Holman update

March 19, 2020

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below, praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” This familiar doxology lasts 20 seconds, and it lifts our spirits while Tom and I sanitize our hands!

Tom and I postponed our visit to Washington and Oregon, and we’re currently “sheltering in place” at home. In some ways our lives haven’t changed – we continue to work on translation as usual. We’re grateful for the means to connect with our church through live streaming of worship, with our work colleagues through daily morning zoom meetings for prayer, and with family and friends by phone, email, text, and Facebook. We pray that you’re also staying connected with one another and staying well.

I (Mary) will continue to check with the Waja team in Nigeria by Skype, so pray for the Internet and phone network connections to be good.

“The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1

Mary

Mary and Tom Holman

Contact us:

Mailing Address: 7611 36th Ave. North #215, New Hope, MN 55427

Phones: Mary: 763-218-0506; Tom: 651-726-4581

E-mail addresses: Tom_Holman@wycliffe.org Mary_Holman@wycliffe.org

*Members of Wycliffe Bible Translators, Box 628200, Orlando, FL 32862, 1-800-Wycliffe. Visit our Wycliffe Page: [Wycliffe.org/partner/Holmans](http://wycliffe.org/partner/Holmans)

Associate Members of Lutheran Bible Translators, PO Box 789, Concordia, MO 64020, 1-800-532-4253. Visit our LBT Page: <http://us.lbt.org/project/tom-mary-holman>

To give by check, please include a separate note stating: “Preference for the Wycliffe/LBT ministry of Tom and Mary Holman”

Today I am pondering Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:5-42) and (because I can't seem to not think about it) coronavirus (COVID-19).



As I reflect on the story of this woman coming to get water in the middle of the day – a time when no one else but her was at the well, in a space that did not feel like community to her but rather a place of dis-community, living in a place of discomfort and, I imagine, loneliness – I also think of the circumstances we are in today. What does it mean to have baptismal fonts empty of water and no community gatherings? What does it mean that so many are feeling alone, fearful and anxious? What does it mean to have your life disrupted, your schedule changed, your future unknown? In all my years as pastor, I have never canceled Sunday worship. When I was elected a few months ago, it never occurred to me that I would need to wrestle with questions regarding a pandemic. I never thought that I would recommend closing down buildings and worshiping by electronic means. This is a strange time.

And, sadly, because of anxiousness and fear, people can succumb to their own concerns and forget all about loving God and loving neighbor. When I went into Costco a few days ago and saw the hordes of people cramming their carts full of food, toilet paper and bottled water (why bottled water? Isn't our water fine?), fighting over the last hand sanitizer, I worry for us as a people. When companies choose to gouge prices for soap or other needed items, I am concerned. When people snatch up masks and gloves while the medical community – who are on the front lines – have to go without because these items are unavailable, I am appalled. When one group of people start pointing at other groups of people and shouting, "You are to blame! You brought this plague to us!" I am horrified.

It would seem that in this time we have a choice. We could retreat into our safety zones and sever connections. We could only think of ourselves and not worry about another. We could ostracize one or more people and cling only to those closest to us. We could hoard and stockpile. Or ... we could be the church.

I am drawn to the words of Martin Luther regarding actions in the midst of a pandemic. In 1527, ten years after Luther published his 95 theses, the plague raged in his home of Wittenberg. Many students and professors at the University of Wittenberg left. And Luther did not condemn those who left. He understood their leaving. But Luther and his wife Katharina (who was pregnant) stayed. And, in fact, they took in the sick into their home. This is what Luther wrote regarding his staying:

Yes, no one should dare leave his neighbor unless there are others who will take care of the sick in their stead and nurse them. In such cases we must respect the word of Christ, "I was sick and you did not visit me ..." [Matt. 25:41-46]. According to this passage we are bound to each other in such a way that no one may forsake the other in his distress but is obliged to assist and help him as he himself would like to be helped. [Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague]

Elsewhere in this tract Luther says to not be foolhardy, so keep that in mind, too. But even with that, I am in awe of Martin and Katharina Luther on their actions.

In this time, when society is telling us to hoard and blame, Jesus calls us to another way. Jesus calls us to form Holy Community always – even when it looks different than it has from the past. Jesus calls us to open our arms to the other. Jesus calls us to consider those who need food or shelter or companionship during this time. I believe Jesus is even calling us to not gather because of the most vulnerable among us. If you would like some concrete suggestions, please go to the page devoted to COVID-19 information. www.lutheransnw.org/covid-19

Bishop's message continued

To go back to Jesus and the woman at the well: We don't know much about this woman. We don't know why she was ostracized. Maybe the five husbands? Maybe living with one who was not her husband? I don't know. But this is what I do know. Jesus did not continue her self-isolation, her loneliness, her exclusion. For you see, what started as a simple request for water, ended with this woman gathering the community around her as they all rush toward the living water of Jesus.

I am envisioning a great rush to the waters and the table when this quarantine is done. I am anticipating hugs and handshakes and peace exchanged when we can be together as community again. But for now ... we are the church. And this means doing what we are always called to do – loving God and loving our neighbor in all of the different ways that we can in this world.

And be of good cheer and peace. For we are a faithful people. We are a resurrection people. And we know that God is here with us and holding us. All will be well, faithful beloveds.

In the Hope of the Risen Christ,
Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

This is an unprecedented time and there's a lot of information to sift through. Sometimes it is hard to know what to do. There are some great resources available for congregation and individuals on our synod website and the ELCA's website.

<https://www.lutheransnw.org/covid-19> & <https://elca.org/publichealth>



Prayers

We pray for those coping with health problems:

Don Brown, Walt Himple, Michael Klingensmith, Theresa Linvog-Wood, Tom Logen, Kelly Moll, Joan Martinell, Shirley Pishaw, Dick Scansen and Karen Schoeld

We pray for those in assisted living or nursing homes:

Vera Anderson, Lila Geisler, Shirley Pishaw, Dick Scansen, and Donna Sjoquist

We pray for those celebrating a birthday in April:

(5) Carla Salmon, (12) Maryls Pickrell, (15) Dick Scansen, (20) Doug Bauer, (20) Carol Hovick, (21) Vera Anderson, (22) Evie Nanninga, (25) Joanne Brock, (26) Nick Rudnick, (27) Joseph Himple, (27) Rachel Schoeld

We pray for the family and friends of Dick Hinea who passed away on March 12, 2020.

Prayers to Pray during a Pandemic:

1. For the sick and infected: God, heal and help. Sustain bodies and spirits. Contain the spread of infection.
2. For our vulnerable populations: God, protect our elderly and those suffering from chronic disease. Provide for the poor, especially the uninsured.
3. For the young and the strong: God, give them the necessary caution to keep them from unwittingly spreading this disease. Inspire them to help.
4. For our local, state, and federal governments: God, help our elected officials as they allocate the necessary resources for combatting this pandemic. Help them to provide more tests.
5. For our scientific community, leading the charge to understand the disease and communicate its gravity: God, give them knowledge, wisdom, and a persuasive voice.
6. For the media, committed to providing up-to-date information: God, help them to communicate with appropriate seriousness without causing panic.
7. For consumers of media, looking to be well-informed: God, help us find the most helpful local information to equip us to be good neighbors. Keep us from anxiety and panic, and enable us to implement the recommended strategies, even at a cost to ourselves.
8. For frontline health care workers, we thank you for their vocational call to serve us.