

GRAPEVINE NEWSLETTER

November 2022

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Pastor's Ponderings – *on thanks and clarifications*

Thank you to all who warmed my heart by your words, cards, treats, and surprises in celebration of what was named “Pastor Appreciation Sunday.” I felt appreciated! And I hope you feel appreciated, too. I am grateful that “we are the church together!”

Thank you, too, to all who participated in the conversation circles, Core Values portion of the “who are we and what are we about” sessions we will engage in over this program year, and those who have weighed in via the survey asking for input about worship services as well as asking what people hope to have happen before feeling comfortable voting on the proposal made by Prestige Development. Adding your voice and listening to others’ is one way that we are actively “church together”! Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find some “results” of the Core Value workshop and a compilation of input from the conversation circles where some of the pros and cons of selling or retaining land were discussed. If you have not shared your preference around when/if to return to two worship services, or what else would help you feel informed enough to vote on the proposal, please use the survey link in the rewind, e-blast, or here: <https://forms.gle/vqSPXpt57JvBScBcA>, to weigh in.

While we have not officially set a date for voting on the proposal by Prestige, planning to make an intentional decision (whether yes *OR* no) is healthier for our congregation than the idea of just tabling it so that it “just goes away”. While tabling a decision until a later specified time could also be a healthy option, to not decide in the hope that the decision goes away is in fact a passive decision, but one that betrays our agency and autonomy. For those who suggest that not deciding would be better for our congregation, please know that that route is more likely to set us up for a different sort of and longer term life sapping dissension. Let us bravely trust one other and, more importantly, God, through our process of discernment .

Speaking of God, I’ve learned that some of you interpret my wondering if the proposal is “from God’s” as meaning I assume then, a particular decision. About one way forward, I do not, although I *have* come to a sense that the very fact we received the offer feels “of God” because it’s stirring us somewhat out of lingering post

pandemic malaise. When a decision involves a group, it is essential that discernment happen as a group—any one of us is likely to think our preference or leaning is certainly “what God thinks” when that is most certainly not the truth—for any of us! That being said, having trust that God will guide us through mutual, prayerful, intentionally God-centered discernment is something about which I have strong conviction. (A regret I have about the conversation circles format I established is that we didn’t ground the conversations in scripture, to be reminded why this matters.) I do take the need for spiritual grounding seriously; turning to God to ask for direction is not performative to me.

Over the last couple of months, several folks mentioned merger as an alternative to our considering the sale of land for affordable housing. In response, an important clarification I need to make is that if merger is considered, it would mean that we are ready to close the congregation and join with/give all BSLC resources to another congregation. It would be imprudent to make a decision assuming (or even hoping) that another congregation would choose to merge into Beautiful Savior, as some are assuming might happen. (You know the saying “the only person you can change is yourself”...?)

Along with talk about mergers is the suggestion that a merger would “help Pastor Jean”. I’m not sure where that comes from, but in case it’s because I ask people to participate in making BSLC’s ministry happen, I want to say that the main reason I do that is because I understand that to be one of my significant job responsibilities! To use biblical witness to make the case, in Ephesians 4 the work of a pastor (as well as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers) is described to be to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” (Eph 4:11-12). It is true that our constitution adds a few more responsibilities for me; it also includes a variety of responsibilities for the congregation. (I am fairly certain many folk haven’t thought about this so here’s a link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/19aCvHcP1xB9DrV8x5t7SNF3aOLSwLEXa/view?usp=share_link to view so you may see applicable parts of our constitution.) I should, however, admit that sharing the work of the congregation mutually *does* help prevent my burning out, but more importantly, it helps generate creativity and provide for a “greater whole”!

With you on the journey, Pastor Jean

Last reminder: our 2022 Congregational Annual Meeting is this coming Sunday, November 6th, after worship. Please plan to participate **in-person if you want to have voice and vote** due to the changes in the WA state statutes. Next year we'll have to vote to adopt updates to the model constitution so that we may again vote electronically.

Regular WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

- Sundays -- Worship 10:00 AM until further notice
 - Sunday School - 10:30 AM on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays
- Wednesdays - Bible Study (zoom) 10:30 (ask PJ for link)
Jr. Choir 4:30; Bell Choir 4:45; Confirmation Class & Adult Choir 6:30
- Thursdays--10:00 Bible study in person; 10:00-2:00 LWR quilting

Regular MONTHLY MEETINGS:

- 3rd Sundays - Council Meeting 11:30 AM
 - 3rd Thursdays - Peace & Justice 6:00 PM (w/potluck meal or bring your own)
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BSLC's Winter Shelter News:



Fall is here and it's time to plan for the winter sheltering offered through BSLC. November is the time when this faith community opens its doors and hearts to provide safe sleeps on cold, wet nights. Beautiful Savior Lutheran will again provide hospitality for men, women and children (and pets!) who are referred through the Housing Hotline. We will reopen our shelter on Sunday, November 13, and then provide shelter and meals on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday nights through mid-March.

We are fortunate to have Outsiders Inn again staff the shelter overnight while we will provide nutritious meals, clean bedding, and ideally help with morning clean-up. There may be opportunities for volunteers to greet guests and assist the paid staff. More on that later. Volunteer training is available through Insiders Out for those who wish to become more involved and better equipped.

To sign up to help with breakfast/clean up, help set up for dinner/clean up, or bring a hot meal for 18-20 **hungry** guests please sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0849A4A623A2FC1-bslc2>

The ministry we provide by serving as a shelter is a blessing to the community—especially to those without shelter. *Thank you all for your support.*



For those of you with BSLC prior to COVID, remember **Brown Bag Sundays?** Well, they're back!! As cold weather approaches, it is time for the brown bag collection for those in need. We are asking for H.U.G.S.! **H**ats, **U**nderwear, **G**loves and **S**ocks for men, women and children of all sizes. Please donate new, packaged items. You may bring your items to the church and place them in the can by the men's room in the back hallway. Thank you for sharing the warmth! - *Your Social Ministry Committee*

The Walk & Knock is back this year! Please place a well marked bag (or bags) of non-perishable food or toiletries on your porch by 9am for pickup, on Saturday, December 3, 9 - 2 PM, or take your donation to one of our **barrel locations**.



Lutheran
World
Relief

Lutheran World Relief -- Autumn Gifts of Hope!

The return of rain and cooler temperatures reminds us we are truly wrapping up one season and transitioning to another. As it is the end of the harvest season, it is also the completion of our gathering together and assembly of kits for the annual Fall In-gathering in LWR regions across the US.

On Sunday, October 23 the congregation blessed the fruits of our labors and the fruits of support that make the work of your LWR Team possible. As I write we are getting ready to pack the 39 quilts that were draped in the church and put the finishing touches to packing the kits represented in the basket.

On Friday morning, Oct. 28, we will load a van with our Gifts of Hope: 39 quilts, 157 School kits, 98 Personal Care kits and 15 Baby Care kits to begin their journey first to Beaverton then to Maryland and then to points across the globe where need continues to be filled.

As Thanksgiving approaches, we give thanks for the support of the Beautiful Savior community. We hold your support in deep gratitude. We also give thanks for those who tied and hemmed quilts, those made parts of what became a bounty of backpack bags, those who shopped for and provided needed items for kits, for those who assembled kits and for those who packed the 30 boxes that are filled with the love and kindness and generosity of this congregation.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, our gifts will be allocated for destinations abroad. As we pass through Advent, our season of Hope, those gifts we sent will be traveling

across oceans yet not named to us. When Christmas arrives, the gifts will be approaching their destinations. And some time in 2023, our gifts will be delivered to people whom we will likely never know much like the magi who traversed great distances to deliver gifts to a child they did not know, yet knew by faith. A bit of that first Epiphany, made new again.

We are sending love and a bit of light, a reflection of that long ago light of wonder. Each kit or quilt is a big hug from the members of Beautiful Savior. So with this shipment on its way, we take a deep breath as we, too, begin the work again and prepare with all of you for our 2022 Advent journey.

You are invited to join in the work of LWR each Thursday, 10 AM - 2:30 PM. *All are welcome.* Come when you can, stay as long as you are able.

Once again, many thanks for your support, *Your LWR Team*

BIBLE & BOOK STUDY OPPORTUNITIES!

- Current book: ***An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*** by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. Email pastorjean@beautifusaviorlutheran.com to receive a Zoom link. We'll be choosing a new focus and book soon—stay tuned!
- Wednesday Morning Zoom Bible Study** 10:30 (request link from Pastor Jean)
- Thursday Gather Bible Study** meets in person at BSLC, 10:00 AM. For more information contact Nancy K (contact information available through the church office)

Compilation of Conversation Circle Notes

To help the congregation with processing of the proposal from Prestige Development, to purchase approximately half of the land BSLC currently stewards, “conversation circles” were offered. Of the numerous options provided, four gatherings with 19 participants total, processed together. After a brief introduction and prayer, the first activity was to consider the strengths, opportunities, and aspirations of the congregation (we skipped the step of defining the results we hope to achieve if opportunities and aspirations are lived into, due to time restrictions). This was followed by an exercise weighing the potential positives and negatives for both congregation and community, of selling the property for affordable housing or retaining the property (admittedly, mostly we didn't get to the second set of considerations as time passed quickly). You can engage in the same activities using the documents accessed here: [☰ Grid to consider pros & cons](#) [☰ BSLC SOAR activity](#) or available in the building. A condensed compilation of responses (a number of responses were repeated by several people) may be found here:

[☰ Conversation Circles to Process Proposal-6](#)

A final set of questions are also valuable to have others of you to consider, and ideally weigh in on (email responses to pastorjean@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com):

1. What are your greatest concerns, regardless of how the vote goes?
2. What are your greatest hopes, regardless of how the vote goes?
3. How should we (all) pay attention to relationships even now, and the likelihood of people's grief and disappointment after the vote occurs? (however the vote turns out, there will be some people disappointed and needing to let go of or grieve whatever hopes and dreams they held related to the vote going "the other way")
4. What questions do you have? What else needs to happen to feel like due diligence has been served?
5. When do you think the vote should occur? What is an adequate amount of time to continue processing?

Output from Activity #1: Identifying Commonly held Core Values

On Sunday October 23, approximately 30 people participated around tables, in winnowing down a pile of 60 cards with common "core value" words on them. In an hour each group had to come to an agreement, keeping no more than five value cards—some groups were quite creative in their attempts to retain more!

A core value describes something essential to the heart/DNA of a person or an organization. When we live with integrity, others as well as ourselves can identify the unique constellation of values by which we live. When we form relationships with others, each person has their own constellation of the most core to them values, even as the relationship embodies shared values which define the community you form.

Core values are lived, embodied, not aspired to. For example, an individual or group may aspire to grow in their greater expression of a value which is not part of their DNA, but by definition, whatever that value is, it is not that person or group's core value; however a core value might be the motivation toward growing in a particular direction.

The activity ended without doing the final step, because it is important to "sit with" the words that were seen to describe core values that are at the heart of who we are as Beautiful Savior, to see how they fit. Are the words that were kept "the right words" to capture what was intended? Are there better ways of phrasing or words to better communicate to others who we are? Were all the "right" values included in the original mix of cards?

That's where we are now. Those who participated in the workshop can let their ideas percolate further as others of you ponder their results. If you want to form a small group or gather as several small groups to actually go through the exercise, just ask. But however you decide to participate, please weigh in. The goal is to find no more

than five words or word pairs that best capture and communicate to people beyond our congregation, what we are about or for as a congregation, at our essence. Once we reach a consensus of sorts, those words will be put on our website and will be used to help to make decisions. Thank you for being a part of the process! Results from the event, plus examples of how they might be further processed:

Note: a next step is to add modifiers that are verbs/adjective expressing action

One group's list plus examples of how to combine or add words to capture a sense of action:

- Faith Practices Practicing faith
- Inclusive Community Forming Inclusive Community
- Authentic Integrity Fostering Authenticity and Integrity
- Hospitality and Relationship Growing relationships
- Advocacy and Service

Another group, then reduced to two lines as another example

- _____ Worship (scripture, prayer, music as foundations)
- Spiritual Growth
- Inclusive Hospitality
- Social Justice
- _____ Worship
- Responding through Inclusive Faith (spiritual growth, hospitality, & social justice)

A group that wanted to keep the words on the right, to give meaning behind the words:

- Faith (scripture/the Bible, prayer)
- Community (participation, inclusivity, hospitality, involvement, relationship)
- Integrity
- Purpose

A last group's words, with some possible ways to further emphasize action

- Scripture Grounded in Scripture
- Integrity Promoting Integrity
- Acceptance Advocating Acceptance
- Generosity Sharing in Generosity
- Striving to make a difference

And, spurred by some comments made by the younger participants, comes this possible combo shared the Sunday after in worship: **Inclusive Faith** (the two separately observed that "faith" can be used to exclude or judge people, but at BSLC, one said, we accept and include people whether they believe the same or not).