

GRAPEVINE NEWSLETTER

September 2022

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, ELCA
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Pastor's Ponderings

Siblings in Christ, how fast upon us has come this new program year! A **new program year** always seems to bring with it new opportunities and choices to be made about how a congregation “does church”. We’ve been through a lot and we’ve come out changed, with much still to discover about how this is so.

While we are much more free to gather and able to plan for active service, ministry, and fellowship, many people in our congregation, as across society, experience the need for continuing cautions, and others continue in the grip of malaise, not ready to take on more active involvement. This has indicated that the programming this fall brings will closely resemble what last fall brought rather than precovid times. Choirs will meet, confirmation will occur, zoom studies will continue, and here and there folks will gather for study, and fellowship.

Worship will remain at 10:00 only for at least the next few months (*the vote was a strong majority - 70% - to stay with one worship service, to help rebuild a sense of community*). Because of this, the start of Sunday school is pending because the change to one service impacts them greatly and timing needs to be determined. The youth group needs adult mentors to support their activities, although the youth are quite capable of planning their own. **As you** (individually and collectively) **feel stirred to suggest and support** (i.e., participate in making happen) **other plans, more will come into being.**

In the months of September – November, I plan to again try out a plan to offer **fellowship opportunity with added purpose**, including rescheduling the event to begin to put into words “who we are at our core, as a community” by identifying congregationally shared core values—these can help us work on identifying our “why” through a later process. This first event will involve interactive “lightning rounds” of forced choice sorting of value cards with words associated with “being church”. Another event will identify and highlight the abundant resources or assets of our congregation, which will then be catalyzed to generate a short term action plan (maybe two) for some new fun or otherwise meaningful activity that can help us reconnect or make a difference in the community. And the need to engage in deep lament about all the certainty, people, and life that was lost in these recent years, is strong. Do we have a bonfire where we

cast all that has and continues to weigh us down from this period, as well as an ingathering of hopes and dreams to till into the soil of new life? Maybe. Expanded participation in the co-creation of a ritual of lament for what has been lost, followed by a ritual of hope for the future will increase the meaningfulness of what happens. I had put some dates for these activities on my calendar, but in recent times we've had two proposals come before the congregation that probably deserve to be considered first.

Because of the conversations and connections made about eighteen +/- months ago about the possibility of becoming involved in a plan to provide **affordable housing**—both as part of a synod initiative and/or a collaborative group locally, our congregation came to the attention Prestige Development, which has a driving goal to increase available affordable housing in Vancouver. After an initial conversation with me, they submitted a letter of interest to explore with us the possibility of their purchasing and developing the southern half of our property to provide affordable housing for seniors, one of the demographics facing increasing need in our community. Our location has excellent access to the bus line, varieties of nearby stores, including three groceries, medical care, and other amenities. Their proposal is that they build a four story building with up to 82 units. More details will be shared on September 11 after worship, when an informational meeting will occur. Because this is not a decision any one of us, or any small group of us can make, it is essential that voting members of the congregation become involved in the discernment process.

As you can imagine, wide-ranging responses have been stirred in those who serve on the council, and it is likely this news will stir all levels of responses among you reading this. Some will feel instant and strong resistance—that is very natural, with fears about loss and previously unimagined change taking hold. Others will respond with a blaze of excitement and energy, thinking about new possibilities for the mission and ministry of Beautiful Savior. This is also a natural response, to consider new partnership and ministry possibilities. And as is always the case, other folk will fall on a continuum between these two extremes. Regardless of where we individually fall, we must remember the need to be sensitive to one another and to listen to the best of our ability, to what others of differing perspectives have to say—none of us has the only right perspective.

We are offered an opportunity, with potential for both useful and transformative impact upon the congregation. Is this an opportunity provided by God? That remains to be seen—something we need to discern our way forward together. It is not a decision for any one of us or any small group of us to make—this level of decision making legally and ethically requires the body of the congregation to enter into making the decision. To

begin shared deliberation, we will have a “meeting of the whole” for initial discussion on September 11 after worship. We will then schedule another meeting to invite representatives of Prestige Development to present their vision and answer questions.

A second opportunity has been offered to us as well. A “friend of the congregation” was caught by some of what we already do (winter shelter), previous plans to build on and include **showers**, and aware of the need for people to shower even when they are houseless, so she pledged funds to match with others to move forward with a mobile or “add on” unit as Immanuel installed last year. There was concern by council members that if we plumbed in an add on, that it would trigger the county to require we immediately connect to city water, so talks stalled here, but this same friend mentioned this challenge she had made and the friend said they would contribute also, if we moved forward. When Friends of the Carpenter spoke about their new mobile shower trailer (and one with washers and dryers) I wondered if this might be a way to move forward without the trigger for the sewer connection. What we need to make this a viable plan, is indication that we have members for whom this can be a ministry, to make sure adequate supplies are on hand and that the showers are sanitized between guests. The council asks for those who have a passion to provide care to those who live on the streets or in shelters, to step up to let them know this is something you are ready to invest in. AND, out of any shower support team that develops, to have a smaller team do the research and present a plan to the council so that all of us have a clearer understanding of what such a project requires to make happen and sustain.

It’s exciting to have opportunities to consider. May they stir us to open our hearts and minds and then, with intention discern with prayer, bible study, and conversation, what path God is calling us to follow—for the good of the wider community we are to serve, and this congregation. *Blessings as we continue our journey into a new program year!*
Pastor Jean

Regular WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

- Sundays -- 10:00 AM worship, continuing into the fall
- Sunday School – start time yet to be determined
- 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 12:30 PM
 - 3rd Thursdays – Peace & Justice 6:00 PM (w/potluck meal or bring your own)
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Growing Our Pool of Counters–New Opportunity!

Would you like to be a volunteer at BSLC but never saw the right 'fit.' Well, consider being a Counter. You'd be joining a great group of people who consolidate offerings received at church services, project receipts, and those accumulated during the week via the mail. We provide one-on-one instruction with an experienced volunteer and make sure you're comfortable with the process over an extended period of time. You don't have to have accounting experience; a sense of humor helps when totals don't agree and 'where's the error' attitude is needed, but the only requirements are confidentiality and a background check.



Contact Carol Noah at 360.355.5803 or tmandcn2017@gmail.com if you're interested in being either a regular or substitute. Currently, we have both Friday or Sunday schedules possible .

Lutheran World Relief -- Gifts of Hope!

Lutheran World Relief works with three international partner organizations to provide basic supplies to people in need in addition to promoting economic growth, developing water resources through creating wells and helping to develop civil society through education and modeling. The kits and quilts provided by congregations such as ours undergird these programs.



The need for kits of all kinds as well as quilts never diminishes. Conflict, poverty and climate issues drive the needs and none of those is going away anytime soon.

Good news! We are on target to complete at least 30 quilts to ship at the end of October. More good news! A huge thank you to those who have contributed school supplies for the school kits we will be assembling soon. Looking good for achievement of our goal to complete 150 kits. We have a new volunteer who has been a real boon to making backpack bags to hold school supplies.

Where you can help:

- You can help us get closer to our Health kit goal by providing new or gently used bath towels (27x54") in dark colors. Target, Kohl's and JC Penney are sources of good quality towels on sales for less than \$4 each
- We need lots of t-shirts for our baby care kits in sizes 6 - 24 months. No onesies, please. We also need 10 - 12 pajama sets with pull-on pants sizes 6-12 months to pair with larger pajamas to complete kits.. Our goal is 15 kits though we always hope to do more.
- Our original goal for Health kits is 150 but we have received only 18 towels so far. We may need to scale back this goal as we did this past spring.

We really appreciate the generous support of the congregation through the years. Covid has been challenging for all of us yet, with the support of members, our project continues to improve the lives of people in far away places who we likely will never meet. *Together we are blessed to be a blessing! Thank you!*

BIBLE & BOOK STUDY OPPORTUNITIES Resume Sept 11ff!

- You are invited to join a new discussion series on Sept 11 via Zoom!** The group will read *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* .



On September 11, we will discuss the Introduction and 1st Chapter of *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, by acclaimed historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. Dunbar-Ortiz offers a history of the US which originally comprised 15 million Native people who inhabited this land. She explores what happened and what is said to have happened. She challenges us to read history and understand our own responsibility in it. Interested? Email pastorjean@beautifusaviorlutheran.com to receive the Zoom link

As Bill Ayers summarizes: "She draws a straight line from the sins of our fathers -- settler colonialism, the doctrine of discovery, the myth of manifest destiny, white supremacy, theft, and systematic killing -- to the contemporary condition of permanent war, invasion and incarceration, and the constant use and threat of state violence. Best of all, she points a way beyond amnesia, paralyzing guilt, or helplessness toward discovering our deepest humanity in a project of truth-telling and repair."

- 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)

Next Community Shred Day - Saturday, Oct. 8, 10:00 - 1:00 Two banker-size boxes are the limit, \$5 donation suggested/box. Proceeds support 2023 Mexico Mission house building.

CONFIRMATION UPDATE: Begins Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 6:30

Confirmation refers to a learning process about matters of faith, specifically ELCA Lutheran perspectives, and the Bible. At the end of the educational process, students may choose to affirm the promises of baptism as they take ownership of their own faith journeys. Students in the sixth grade or older who are not already registered to participate in the 2022-2023 confirmation program may contact Pastor Jean (pastorjean@beautifusaviorlutheran.com) to express interest or for more information.