

The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
1-805-688-4637
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July 2020

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Pastor Chris's Message



I know our country has been embroiled with news of the death of George Floyd and the ensuing protests that have followed. I imagine many of us have had our fill of commentary on both the needed response to his death as well as the actual response, some of which has taken the form of riots and property damage. While it might be tempting to stop listening to what's happening and go back to other elements of life, I will say with conviction that our faith compels us to keep listening, learning, and being advocates for justice in our nation and communities. As a pastor, I can't help but look at the death of George Floyd and the calls for change his death has sparked, which now span all 50 states and dozens of countries across the globe, and see deep parallels to the death of Jesus. However, I'm also noticing that a lot of these parallels are lost on us who have only viewed Jesus' death as a sacrifice for humanity.

We often separate Jesus' death and its meaning for the world from Jesus' life and ministry. This is one of the reasons I've advocated for replacing the Apostle's Creed with a different affirmation. Recall the words, "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried." That comma in between the clauses of being born and suffering under Pontius Pilate is known among scholars as "the Great Comma," because within it are contained all of Jesus' life and ministry, yet it is not deemed worthy of creedal acknowledgment. Yet, this life and ministry pertain so much to why Jesus died for humanity.

If we understood Jesus' life and ministry and the context in which he lived we would more readily see his anti-imperial message. He spoke against Roman Imperialism. He stood against Rome, but did so from a place of non-violent resistance and scripture so blatantly gives this voice. When Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of God" or the "Son of Man", he is pitting himself against the Roman Emperor, as these were titles reserved for him. Yet Jesus is not declaring an act of war by claiming these titles. Rather, he walks willingly to the cross. The Pax Romana (Peace of Rome) was a well-known tool of propaganda that all in the empire were aware of. It was an ideology, which stated that peace in the empire would come through conquest and control. Any who would willingly or unwillingly be part of the Roman Empire could experience this peace as long as they submitted to Rome's authority and paid heavy taxes. When Jesus states in John, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" he is speaking against Pax Romana and instead speaking of the peace that comes from compassion and working towards justice. Caesar Augustus' birth was heralded as Good News for the Empire of Rome, yet in Mark Jesus states that the Good News is "the Empire of God is at hand." Jesus' life and ministry, in many ways, was centered against the structure of the Roman Empire, which relied on domination, oppression, and violence.

When we look at Jesus' death in light of his life and ministry, we learn of a man with a countercultural message of peace who walked willingly into Rome's system of violence and death. He does not fight back with his own violence and domination, but rather steps into Rome's aggression

without struggle. And what happens? This system does not destroy him. He is raised from the dead. Through his own non-violent, radical, resistance to Rome, he shows that Rome's system of aggression and power cannot defeat God's system of justice and love. But it is not only Jesus that is resurrected on Sunday; it is also the movement he started, which the disciples were witness to while he was alive, and to which they carried on after he ascended into heaven. By walking willingly to the cross, by dying as such a blatantly peaceful and innocent person, he exposed Rome's strategy of control through oppression and violence. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection showed his followers that even though this system is massive and overwhelming it is not bigger than God's Empire. From this singular act on the cross, informed by years of ministry throughout Judea, Jesus exposed the limits of a powerful system and started a limitless movement of non-violent, radical justice through love that was unstoppable.

When video surfaced that showed Derek Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, our world collectively witnessed a crucifixion. In his death a system of oppression and violence, especially against people of color was exposed. Don't misunderstand, people have been working tirelessly to expose this system for decades, but the amount of time Chauvin was on his neck, the scores of video that show George Floyd did not resist arrest, the explicit innocence that was present in his cries for breath and for his mother hit humanity so viscerally that a movement started. But we didn't just witness the death of an individual. George Floyd's death sparked such a movement because represented in it were the deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Philando Castille, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, and all the voices and lives that have been trying to expose this system for too long.

Just as Jesus' death did not expose the individuals who nailed him to the cross, but rather exposed the system he stood against, George Floyd's death is not necessarily about exposing individuals; it's about exposing a system of violence and oppression that is present in our society today, just as it was present in Rome 2,000 years ago. This is not about going out and targeting law enforcement officers. There are men and women out there who do far more than our society asks of them and it's an indescribably difficult job that is often thankless. This is about exposing the system we all have grown accustomed to that celebrates war, violence, conquest, oppression, and control. It's a system that places the accumulation of wealth ahead of human life and consistently creates categories of who's in and who's out, who's worthy and who's not. It's a system that looks at problems within society and instead of investing in evolving solutions, quickly turns to violence and oppression as a means of solving them, almost as if it's our default mode. And it is so prolific it's not only present in our justice system, but in education, religion, government, entertainment, the work place, media, literature, history, sports, and almost all swaths of society.

George Floyd's death exposed this system in such a raw way that the flames of a movement started 2,000 years ago in Jesus, which has been kept lit by marginalized peoples for centuries has now been fanned into a fire that has swept the globe demanding justice. And just as it was in Jesus' time, our faith is being called upon. Our faith which stands up to these massive and overwhelming systems and responds with non-violent, radical justice through love is being called to speak out, to advocate, to demand and work towards change of a system that too often defaults to violence, conquest, oppression and control, and replace it with systems of equity, abundance, ingenuity, mutuality, diversity, radical love, compassion and justice.

When I talk about systems of oppression, the Church is not exempt. It is not a coincidence that we have isolated Jesus' death from his life and ministry. By doing so we've attached an independent meaning to his death that does not call us to see him in George Floyd and all those who suffer from oppression. The Church has been abhorrently involved in trying to control through violence and conquest. However, the Church is being called right now to rid itself of this evil and be part of the movement that Jesus started, the movement that George Floyd's death has once again

sparked, the movement we are destined for. We are being called to do this through non-violent, radical love. And silence will only benefit the oppressor. Yet we must be reminded that no matter how massive and overwhelming this oppressive system is, God's Empire is bigger, God's Empire is at hand, and God is calling us to bring it about.

**In Christ's Love,
Pastor Chris**

Youth and Family Ministry

Summer Greetings,

As many of you know scheduled events have changed due to our current pandemic. VBS (June 22nd-26th) will be rescheduled for next summer. *** Until then, I will be crafting decorations while working from home. If you need something to do and would like to help, please email me and I can give you some creation ideas. ***

Each year VBS grows in attendance as children excitedly return and bring more friends along. Our volunteers are the most wonderful and integral parts of this event! You can contact me directly if you'd like to help in any capacity.

Here is a list of supplies for next year. If you have any items to lend or you'd like to donate, please see below:

- Masking tape
- Silver duct tape
- X-Large cardboard boxes
- White & Blue fairy lights
- White & Blue iridescent paper
- Polyester fiberfill/ batting (decor)
- Artificial Christmas trees (decor)
- 2 pairs of rain boots (adult size)
- 2 armor breast plates (costume)
- Plastic toy knights helmet (costume)
- Stacks of white & blue & black paper

I have decided to create a new program at Bethania in lieu of VBS, known as **Bethania Busy Bags!** I will contact VBS attendees and create sanitized take home activity bags for parents to pick up in the sanctuary. It will have a scripture lesson and fun activity. These will be available the first and third weeks of July.

Stay safe and healthy,
Livier Ghamari-Brown, Director of Youth & Family Ministry
livierghamari@yahoo.com [\(909\) 962-9366](tel:9099629366)

Faith in Action

Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing Day - Sunday, July 12 at 11 am

Mark your calendar to help us pack brown bag breakfast items for needy local seniors on Sunday, July 12 at 11 am. We are meeting a little later so you can participate in the online worship service with Pastor Chris before coming to pack bags.

We will be practicing social distancing and CDC recommended guidelines. Bags will be packed at individual stations, minimizing contact. Families/households may pack together.

You will need to wear a mask and follow sanitation guidelines. If you have been sick AT ALL for the past 7 days, please do not come. If you are in the "at risk" category, please do not come.

Our little brown bags are for SYV seniors who need to take medications in the morning with food, and would otherwise have nothing to eat with their pills due to financial constraints or physical limitations. Currently we are helping seniors with breakfast bags two times a week, which means we need a minimum of approx. 720 bags per month. This ministry continues to be a vital need for our area.

You can also help out by donating any of the following items. The church is open daily from 9-5 and you can drop off items inside. Or, you can drop them on the packing day.

Protein Drinks (such as Ensure or Atkins)

Soft Granola/Cereal Bars

Protein Bars

Oatmeal Packets (Protein type)

Fruit Cups or Applesauce

Instant Cup of Soup/Lunch or Noodles

Pudding (non-refrigerated)

Small Juice Boxes or Plastic Bottles of Fruit Juices (such as Apple, Cranberry, Orange)

A big **"thank you"** to the for your donations and support.

Your participation, in whatever way you are able, makes a difference in the health and happiness of someone living right here in our valley. Thank you!

-Linda Marzullo, Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
688-5219, 688-3059 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Emergency Food Distribution Site at Bethania **Drive up and Walk up** **Tuesdays, 5:15-6:45 pm**

Bethania continues operating as an Emergency USDA Food Distribution site during the pandemic. We receive food deliveries from SB Co. FoodBank in the morning each Tuesday, which we then sort and bag at 11:00 am. for families. Many kind donations have helped to continue to make this possible. We especially want to thank the SYV Rotary Foundation for their donation from their Fireworks fund proceeds, which will help us continue for several additional weeks.

We can always use donations of protein items (such as canned chicken, tuna, chili) and things such as macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, rice, peanut butter, and cereal. Donations can be left in the church or you can contact me to drop off items. We also distribute diapers and wipes, which are very needed and often hard to find. We welcome donations for this outreach also. The last week of distribution before the Beacon deadline (June 17), we **distributed over 4,915 diapers and hundreds of packages of wipes**. We also served **324 Households with a total of 1,302 Individuals**. Interesting also was that first-time USDA household/food recipients for this month were 101 Households last week.

Distribution is through drive up or walk up. There are no restrictions on income or family size.

This is an incredibly rewarding and emotional experience for many. We all feel blessed to be able to help these people who come to us in great need. We could not do this without our "army" of volunteers, who are all amazing. I am truly grateful for each and every one of them.

If you would like to help, please contact me. Too many people makes it difficult for us all to be safe, unfortunately; but too little make the tasks to be done extra hard. This is why we really need people to sign up in advance. Anyone interested in attending should contact me to see if we can use help that shift/time slot.

We practice COVID-19 safety procedures and have strict guidelines we must follow or risk being shut down. If you have been sick in any way in the previous 7 days, you cannot come to help. Additionally, if you are in a risk category, please do not come and endanger yourself. Be aware that we are moving a lot of heavy canned items from pallets and into bags. Hard work, but so rewarding!

We continue to ask for your prayers and support for this mission. I continue to be proud and in awe of our church and our volunteers as we complete our 14th week of service this week (Tuesday, June 23).

- Linda Marzullo
Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
688-5219, 688-3059 or vikingsprint@verizon.net

Grocery Bags Are Needed

We currently need brown paper grocery bags for our emergency food distribution. You can drop them off in the narthex or at the Church Office. You may send also contact us at 805-688-4637 or bethanialutheranch@gmail.com and we will find a way to get the bags.

- Kristyl

Produce Table May Not Be Open But the Garden is!

Tom and Carolynn Petersen's garden is doing great and producing like crazy. Our Produce Table this year is a pick-your-own event. Contact the Petersens if you would like to come and pick your own fruit and vegetables. Bring your own containers. Remember you need to call first: 805-688-6243.

Right now their garden is producing: Beautiful Boysenberries, Zillions of Zucchini, Dark Green Patti Pans, Crunchy Bell Peppers

Donate whatever amount you like to the "Produce Table" after you pick your produce. Be sure to write "Produce Table" on the memo area on your check.

Get out in the yard and pick your own and enjoy the process! Donations will be used to alleviate hunger. Thank you for continuing to support this program.

- **Social Ministry Committee**

Blessing Box and Blessing Bags Continue Strong

The use of the **Blessing Box** in front of our church has continued strong. Many times we are filling it 9 times a day to keep it stocked. If you are interested in helping, just drop off your items in the box itself. You can also contact us for a day/time to sign up to help check the box.

Our goal with this the Blessing Box was to have the community be able to access assistance at any time, without any stigma, from the items within it. Special thanks to Elizabeth Breen, Donna Hinsbeeck and Rick Marzullo who are all assisting in keep our "mighty pantry on a post" filled for our visitors.

With so many people struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic, we also have made up food "**Blessing Bags**". These Blessing Bags are located in the narthex of the church, so they may be picked up any day between 9 am and 5 pm.

If you or someone you know is in need, please be aware that these daily food programs exist at Bethania. *(See article about Tuesday Food Distribution for another food option)*

Items needed for the Blessing Box include canned and dried foods, snacks, cereal, coffee, condiments, cleaning supplies, cooking oil, coffee, baby items - basically whatever you use in your household, we would like to have to distribute. Feel free to put your items straight into the box on the Atterdag Road side of the church. Or contact me if you like: (805) 688-5219 or (805) 688-3059. You may also email me at vikingpressprint@verizon.net if you need to arrange to meet.

"Thank You" to all who have contributed items, donated, and helped to keep this project going. We received a nice letter from an elderly woman who has been enjoying the use of our Blessing box please enjoy what she wrote to us.

- **Linda Marzullo**

Every morning when I go for a walk, I pass the little food pantry located in front of Bethel Lutheran Church. It is a small cupboard with glass doors mounted on a post. Some days the pantry is filled with food, and on other days it is quite bare.

Almost daily I've seen the same woman stopping to donate. Sometimes she arrives in her car, opens her trunk and proceeds to fill this little pantry with food. Other times, I see her on foot carrying a bag of food to donate. I don't know her name, but I do know she inspires me with her kindness and generosity. In this woman who tends to the little food pantry in our neighborhood I see a living witness to the Spirit alive!



Noisy Sunday, July 26: Day of Service Kit Items

The next "Noisy Sunday" is coming on July 26th. We will only be together virtually but we can still make a joyful noise. Thank you to those who have been able to send in their "Noisy Offering" to the office when there was no way to drop their donation into the buckets.

If the past few months have taught us anything, it is that we need to help those who have no way to access items for personal care needs. We can change our health and our lives (and maybe the world)

- with a simple bar of soap! We can also change a child's world just by providing paper and pencils! What an amazing thought.

We are beginning our annual collection of items for Personal Care Kits and School Kits that are distributed through LWR that we will be putting together in September at Day of Service. Your donations will help us purchase bars of soap, towels, combs, nail clippers and toothbrushes for the kits. These kits will be distributed globally to victims of disease, disaster and need. We could be saving someone from a major illness by simply sharing a bar of soap.

We will also be collecting school supplies for school kits. You may purchase items and drop them off in the church entry area if you prefer to help out that way.

Items needed are:

For Personal Care Kits:

1. Bath size towels (light to medium weight, between 20"x40" & 27"x 40"), dark colors preferred
2. Bars of soap (4-5 oz., any brand, in original wrapping - 2 per kit)
3. Toothbrush (adult size, in original packaging, bulk buys can be repackaged by us)
4. Comb, sturdy wide toothed
5. Nail clippers (with or without nail files)

For School Supply Kits:

<u>70 sheet</u> College ruled Notebooks (spiral bound)	Rulers with centimeters and inches		
Pencil sharpeners	Blunt tip scissors	#2 Pencils	2-1/2" Erasers
Ballpoint (not gel) Pens, Black or Blue ink	Box of Crayons (16 or 24 count)		

'Make change for the better' on Noisy Sunday! So send in your coins and cash and make a joyful jingle on July 26th. Together, we can CHANGE our world.

**- Linda Marzullo, Chair
Social Ministry Committee**

Delivering Items to Residents at Atterdag Village

You may now bring items, like a vase of flowers or a plastic bag with fruit, for residents at Atterdag Village. But, you must call Atterdag (805-688-3263) first and arrange a time to bring something. Once you have an appointment you can drive to the office and someone will come out and get the item and then give it to the resident.

Of course you can always send residents cards and letters.

Recycling for the Preschool Emergency Fund

We are still accepting CRV plastic bottles and aluminum cans for the Preschool Emergency Fund. The drop-off is at the rear entrance of the kitchen/pantry. We are grateful for the response we have had over the years. As a reminder, please remove all caps. This saves us time and effort.

- Kristyl

Events and Occasions

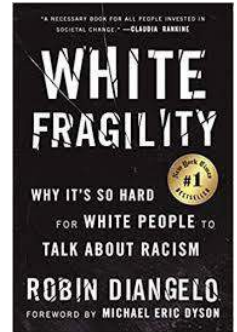


Virtual Theo Pub Date Change

Theology Pub will be gathering on Zoom on July 2 at 7 pm, so make sure you mark the date change on your calendars. It will go back to its normal schedule in August. An email will be sent out with a Zoom link when we get closer to the date.

Book Club Resuming

Book Club will be resuming on Zoom beginning in July and we're starting a new book and changing our meeting day. We will be gathering the 4th Thursday of every month at 2pm to discuss White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo. If you would like to join, please order the book as soon as possible as it's on back order. And make sure you're on the church emailing list so we can send out the Zoom link when we get closer to July 23.



Church Business

Council Meeting Report - June 18, 2020

The June 2020 monthly Council meeting was held at 7:00 pm on June 18, 2020. Members present were Emily Abello, Wendy Bevier, Josh Bratt, Pastor Chris, Stewart Fries, Lynne Hemming, Carol Lake, Lori McConnell, Carolyn Schuit, and Anne Twigg. Jeanelle Needham was not present. Ron Walsh was also present at the meeting.

The June 2020 Council meeting was again conducted via Zoom Conference technology.

Pastor Chris provided a further update on the actions taken by the church in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, including:

- Live stream service improvements
- Food distribution every Tuesday at 5:15 pm
- Blessing Box refilled 6-8 times each day
- Deacon Program getting a very positive response
- Theology Pub moving back to 2nd Thursday each month
- Will not reopen sanctuary until health officials give the okay

The council reviewed and approved the report on the Pastor's Annual Performance Review 2020 dated May 27, 2020.

The council also discussed:

- The recent social and political climate as it involves speaking out and addressing racism.
- New signers on Montecito Bank checking account
- The September Day of Service
- The probability that many of our summer social gatherings will have to be cancelled this year

- Responding to a PG&E request to use Bethania parking lot as Customer Resource Center in times of a Public Safety Power Shutoff
- A request from the Social Ministry committee to re-consider how food distribution cash is being handled
- We received a report from the Preschool Committee Liaison on the re-opening of the Preschool.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 16, 2020.

**The Peace of Christ be with you all,
Stewart Fries, Bethania Council President
805-245-0041**

Treasurer's Report - May Financial Status

Balance sheet:

- General checking has \$7,647 cash available after paying May bills.
- Money market fund has over \$155,000.
- All liabilities are current and all payables are current.
- The Payroll Protection Program loan is listed as a liability until such time as we exhaust the cash, or determine if there is an amount left over that becomes a loan. We will not know that until the end of June.

Profit & Loss, Budget Performance:

Income:

- Offerings for the month were nearly on budget (below by \$280); offerings for the first five months were at 98%.
- Income for the month was \$2,758 below budget; and at 94% for the first five months.

Expenses:

- As part of the PPP loan, the church paid part of the payroll for the pre-school, and that is reflected in account 5028. The funding came from the PPP loan.
- All other salaries and benefits were at or below budget.
- Staff expenses, office administration expenses, meeting expenses, property expenses, and utilities were all under budget.
- All other expenses were also under budget for the month, and for the first five months.
- Factoring in the preschool payroll, we sustained a \$3,413 deficit for the month of May.

- Submitted by Lori McConnell, Treasurer

In Our Hearts, In Our Prayers

We uplift in prayer the following people in our congregation and community. May we minister to and bless all who need God's help.

For comfort during grief for the family and loved ones of Elizabeth Lee. Elizabeth died June 4, 2020. The service celebrating and remembering her life will be held at a future date.

And, **for the family and loved ones of Debbie Fritts**, one of Bill Klein's daughters. Debbie died June 21, 2020.

Andy Blanton, Dennis Bornhoff, Annette Clausen, Sharon Espinoza, Chris Frederiksen, Sheldon & Pat Green, Shannon Hazard, Belle Hoger, Jennifer Howell, Glen Jacobsen, Michael Jech, Robert & Gail Jennings, Gladys Jorgensen, Brenda Knudsen, Jeanne Labarge, Betsy & Steve Logan, John Marzullo, Stella Miller, Brian Merrick, Denise Morris, Eric and Mallory Oftebro, Barbara & Charles Osborn, Marie Ostertag, Kate Pearrison, Chèle Ludwig Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Joyce Purvis, Rikka Rasmussen, Tim Reed, Judy Stamat, Robert Workman, David & Yolanda Yanez, and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.

In celebration and thanksgiving for the birth of Patrick Wayne Cleveland, grandson of Melissa Eck. Patrick was born June 8, 2020.

Southwest California Synod News

We have received news that Bishop Guy Erwin will be resigning as Bishop of the Southwest California Synod effective July 31, 2020. On Aug. 1, he will assume the presidency of United Lutheran Seminary in Pennsylvania, to which he was elected by its board of trustees.

While we are saddened that Bishop Erwin will no longer be our Bishop, we wish him every blessing in his new position and pray for him in his new position.

For more information, please see the synod web page both for the news about this event and Bishop Erwin's letter to the congregations of our synod.

<https://www.socalsynod.org/category/synod-news/>

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