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March 2020
Lent 2020

History Today magazine once took a close look at the shame of Roman crucifixion. The author recognized its reputation: "It was death deserved by the most unworthy of all unworthies; it was death with grim humiliation, ignominy and abasement." The new theology of a god's voluntary humiliation was completely alien to Roman thought. One religious group, called the Gnostics, rejected the shame of the cross and believed Jesus only appeared to be crucified.

Today and throughout history, many are unwilling to accept a God who, out of pure love, endured such shame. (Nigel Spivey, "Christ and the Art of Agony," History Today August 1999)

In the movie The Last Emperor, the young child anointed as the last emperor of China lives a life of luxury with 1,000 servants at his command. "What happens when you do wrong?" his brother asks. "When I do wrong, someone else is punished," the boy emperor replies. To demonstrate, he breaks a jar, and one of the servants is beaten.

In Christianity, Jesus reversed that ancient pattern: when the servants erred, the King was punished. Grace is free only because the giver himself has borne the cost.

This season of Lent we are again impressed at the marvelous “great reversal” of Christ. A God of defeat and humiliation to others, but to us who believe, “the power of God” (Romans 1:16).

As we journey together we marvel at this “wisdom” of God and collapse on our knees to worship our passionate Savior and have our hearts and lives transformed by the radical wisdom of God in Christ.

Humbled by His love with you,
Pastor Russ
Greetings from Bethany Council
“Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life.” Matt 6:25  God is always with us!

Bethany Senior Pastor Call: Bethany congregation will meet February 23 to call a senior pastor. Call documents will be sent shortly thereafter. Pray for God’s guidance as pastor & family consider Bethany’s call. Thanks to Pastor Russ Hess for intentional interim ministry (Office hours: Mon & Wed).

Outreach: Bethany school reaches families with Jesus love in the classroom and Chapel: TK-8: 116, PS: 58, TAT: 17; total of 191 students at Ulatis. Outreach Bible based classes: parenting, personal finance, exercise class, Saturday food & craft events need sponsors to organize. Your personal invitation can help friends & school families learn about Jesus love for them. Thanks to Kevin Shaw & Devon Duncan leading Bethany youth: details in weekly bulletins & Breeze. Thanks to Regina Brown for teaching Bethany Sunday School. Thanks to Janine Browne & Life Touch bringing Bethany directory soon. Talk to Hew Hesterman to help with outreach.

Property Planning: Bethany property team, Terra Realty Advisors (TRA), MADI architects, Swank Construction, IC Engineering Geotech, Phillips Structural, & Clabaugh Landscape Design work to complete permit drawings (40%). Bethany congregation gave go ahead to construct building C&D when $2.7MM is in the bank. Timing depends on city permits, insurance $, & fund raising efforts. The sale of the 2 Orchard houses is in escrow per congregation vote Jan 19. Pastor Hoppe & leaders from St. John’s Lutheran Vacaville presented an offer to purchase Bethany Orchard property. Leaders are in discussion. Vacaville school district is also considering whether to make an unsolicited offer. Council will present offers to congregation when all the details are known.

Orchard Preschool building fire restoration progress: Bethany waits for Church Mutual Insurance response to outstanding claim of additional ~$375,000 that would be needed to rebuild burned preschool. Ray Clemas of Top Notch Construction presented a proposal to move data connection weather head to the roof of a new water proof utility building mounted on the slab over the existing electrical room for Orchard property data, electrical, & sprinkler controller & demolish the burned building for ~$100K. Once the utility building is ready, a permit is needed to demolish the burned building. Council is waiting to hear from Church Mutual & Orchard property purchase offers before proceeding.

Stewardship: God works in amazing ways to bless Bethany congregation & keep His work going forward. Bethany members donated $107K for a matching fund toward new preschool! Mark your gift above tithe with words “Matching Fund” to obtain a match. Read GoBethany.com, Sunday bulletins, Breeze, & Eagle to learn what’s happening in Bethany Ministries & to plan your participation. Thanks for putting the work of Christ first in your plans. Bethany leaders are working to provide the information banks need to refinance with tax exempt bonds in order to reduce loan principle & interest payments. Talk to Curt Johnston to help with Bethany stewardship efforts. Bethany will cut phone expenses by ~$2500/mo by switching to AT&T. The dumpster at Orchard was replaced by a tote to save ~$400/mo.

Property maintenance: Volunteers donate materials, work hard & are appreciated. Orchard: Fellowship Hall: Doug Connor cleared the sink drain & replaced light bulbs in kitchen & worked with Ron Shively to replace fluorescent ballasts. Ulatis: fluorescent light bulbs & ballasts replaced. Contact Mike McCall to help with maintenance & projects.

Business Management: Council is managing Bethany business work flow & records retention until a business manager can be found: special thanks to Natalie Hart, Michelle Aas, Diane Irby, Curt Johnston, & Ron Shively.

Reporting for your church council, Ron Shively – President, Shawn Sanborn – Vice President, Carole Wilson - Secretary
Psalm 119:4-6 - You have commanded Your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping Your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all Your Commandments.

As we run the race of faith, we too pray that we will be steadfast on the path of God's commands. But we also keep our eyes on the finish and on the One who ran that path before us, Jesus our Lord. We often stray from the path of God's commands, but Jesus did not. In Him the psalmist's prayer finds its fulfillment. Jesus obeyed His Heavenly Father, even to the point of death. Through His blood shed on the cross, we are washed clean from our willful and stumbling sins along the path.

By God’s grace through faith in Jesus, "the righteous requirement of the Law" is fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4b). In the sight of God we are not put to shame. God does not see our stumbling falls and our failure to keep His precepts. Rather, God looks at us and sees that we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ Jesus, dressed in the perfect obedience of His beloved Son.

By faith we have been "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10b). How do we know the good works we are to do? Look to God's Commandments! We are to love and worship God alone. We are to honor our parents. Those who are married are to live in faithfulness and honor with one another. We are to respect our neighbor's personal well-being, property, and reputation, to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. These God-pleasing works stretch out like a path before us, to be followed by faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is not an easy path. We will be tempted to stray and to take our eyes from Jesus, but He is with us from start to finish. We find strength in the forgiveness He won for us through His death and resurrection. We are nourished by His Word and through His body and blood in the bread and wine of His holy Supper. With the help of God, we join the psalmist in praying for steadfast faith until, at the time God has appointed for us, we reach the finish line. Then, by God's grace, we will say with the apostle Paul, "I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Board of Elders
What is Lent?

Lent is the 40-day period before Easter when Christians prepare to witness, celebrate, and participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the early church, the forty days before Easter were devoted to study of the essential elements of Christian teaching so that the new converts could make informed and faithful confessions of faith on the day of their baptism. Later, Lent became a time of contemplation of Jesus’ suffering and the significance of the Christian faith for daily life. Christians throughout the centuries have marked the season with prayer, study, and fasting (or, more recently, “giving something up for Lent”) as a way both to identify with Jesus, who fasted in the wilderness for 40 days, and to focus on the importance of their faith.

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and runs to Maundy Thursday. If you’re counting, you’ll realize that there are more than 40 days between those two dates. That’s because Sundays in Lent are not counted. Given that each Sunday celebrates the resurrection, the Church teaches that it’s not appropriate to fast on Sundays.

The practice of daily devotions stems from Lent’s emphasis on deepening one’s faith through study and prayer. Lent offers the opportunity to take up a “discipline” or “spiritual practice” for 40 days, not as a way of meriting God’s favor but because disciplined practice increases our appreciation and understanding of the faith. For generations, parents would read devotions during Lent and Advent at suppertime as a way of passing on the faith to their children, and individuals would read devotions to grow and deepen in their faith. Blessings on your Lenten Journey.

WANTED: Craft Fair Leader

LWML is looking for a motivated woman to take charge of the Fall Craft Fair. There are several ladies who are willing to help, but we need one to step into Kaye Grundmann’s shoes. Please contact Carole Wilson (thewilsons1976@gmail.com) if you are interested.

Every Bethany lady is invited to attend and participate in LWML

The purpose/goal of this ministry: To provide opportunities for personal spiritual growth, a richer prayer life, and retreating into the Word of God. We value each other in Christ, and we accept and encourage each woman to grow in her relationship with others and to use her God-given talents and gifts.

MONDAY NIGHT WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY

Our Bible study is hosted by Terri Denton each Monday evening at 7:00 pm., in her home at 521 Walnut Avenue, Vacaville. This is a great time to get to know other ladies while learning God’s word. Please join us!

MEETING DATE – SUNDAY, March 8TH

Please put Sunday, March 8th on your calendar. We will hold our meeting in room B-8 at 12:00 noon.

MITE CHALLENGE – April 2018-March 2020 - Our district list of mission grants for 2018-2020 totals 100,000. Bethany’s mite challenge is $3,100. We are in the final days of the Bethany Mite challenge. I am so grateful for all of you, because we have not only reached our goal but have exceeded it! Bethany’s total as of December 31, 2019 is $4,188.55. CONGRATULATIONS! We will update again at the end of March. The progress board has been moved to the Fellowship Hall. The grant information is on the LWML bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. ALL Grants have been paid! Praise God for each Mite. Please fill those Mite Boxes and continue God’s wondrous work! Keep up the great work!!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – If you have an idea for a mission project, please come to one of the LWML meetings. Many joyful hands are an asset and doing the Lord’s work is rewarding. Praise God daily and encourage a fellow sister in Christ through the spoken word, cards, emails and prayers!

Carole Wilson – LWML President
Lenten Season for 2020

“Eyes on Jesus”

When the people in the Passion narrative looked at Jesus, what did they see?

*Eyes on Jesus* asks us to look at Jesus through various Biblical character's viewpoints, learning how they saw Jesus. Did they misunderstand Him? Did they recognize Him as the Son of God?

Using Scripture passages from the Gospel of Mark, challenge yourself to consider what you see when you look at Jesus. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 26th, this series will explore the following “eyes.”

**Services will be held at Noon and 6:30pm**

- **February 26th** — “Misjudging Eyes” — Mark 14:1-9
- **March 4th** — “Betraying Eyes” — Mark 14:10-21
- **March 11th** — “Sleepy Eyes” — Mark 14:32-42
- **March 18th** — “Denying Eyes” — Mark 14:26-31
- **March 25th** — “Murderous Eyes” — Mark 14:1-2, 53-65
- **April 1st** — “Worldly Eyes” — Mark 15:1-20

May the Lord lead us to see Him more clearly this Lenten Season.
In February, the Bethany Youth Group participated in a joint youth event with the Shepard of the Hills Youth Group. We arrived at their church in Vacaville where they have a nice youth group room. The room is a little bigger than ours. We did some introductions to get to know each other. We found out that several of the other youth group members we already know from school and other activities in and around Vacaville.

At first, we did a bible study on integrity. What it means to have integrity in today’s world and what the Bible and Jesus says about it. Cheeseballs was also a very popular snack food. We then started to play some games with the other youth group. We played several games of Jenga, hide and seek, and four on the couch. It was very fun and interesting playing these games as it was one youth group against the other. Then to make things interesting we played boys versus the girls and to make it really interesting we mixed up each other’s names. We then treated them to Pizza and Soda and had a great time.

It was nice to know there are other Lutherans in Vacaville that have the same values as we do. We look forward to seeing them again either at school or at another youth group event.

This Spring is going to be a very busy month for the Youth Group. We will be doing two puppet plays and will be serving the Easter Breakfast. The breakfast will be a fundraiser for the Youth Group. We are also planning to do an outdoor recreation event. Hopefully, we will be able to go to the Mt. Cross Challenge Course and Outdoor Recreation Center. The Middle School Youth Group is still having Wednesday meetings at the Bethany School on every other Wednesday. This month it is on March 4th and 18th.

### Bethany Youth Ministry Event Calendar

- **Bible Study** - Every Sunday Morning from 9:00 am
- **Middle School Youth Group** March 4th and 18th from 3:00 pm – 4:30 PM Bethany School
- **March 14th** - Solano Food Bank Fairfield 10 am – 2 pm.
- **March 29th** – Puppet Play Children’s Sermon – 8 am
- **April 5th** – Bonfire/Gaga Ball / BBQ at Hesterman’s House w/Shepard of the Hill – Tentative 4 pm – 8 pm
- **April 12th** – Easter Breakfast Fundraiser
- **May 3rd** – Fellowship Event TBD
- **May 31st** Puppet Play Children’s Sermon – 8 am
This year is flying by and can’t believe we’re inching closer to the end of another successful school year!

Our Bible stories this month will be: Jesus feeds a crowd and Jesus the Good Shepherd. We will also have chapel with Pastor Hess!

We will also be learning about respecting the property of others and how to share toys and our materials.

We will celebrate Dr. Seuss’ birthday and wear “The Green” for St. Patrick’s Day.

March 2-20 marks the dates for our annual See’s Candy fundraiser! Forms will be available in the church narthex so you can get your Easter candy! Come hop on over and place an order today!

Every year the Elk’s Club supply our preschool with a free vision screening visit for each of our preschool students! This year those visits will take place on March 23rd and 24th. This is a wonderful service, as it is not unusual for a couple of students to need a follow up with their doctor.

On Saturday March 28th we will be having our Spring Carnival on the Ulatis Campus. This year’s theme is: “Oh Toodles! Step right up and join the fun! Bethany’s Spring Carnival has begun!” (Disney themed). Carnival will run 10am-1pm.
The Psalms of Lent

March 1, 2020  “Hide Me”  Lent I
Genesis 3:1-21
Psalm 32:1-7
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

The psalms are always dear to us because they are so “human.” In this season of truly acknowledging our human weakness and sin psalms of the Sundays in Lent bring out all kinds of human need themes. Psalm 32 brings out the importance of seeking God as our hiding place—the ultimate safe place for us.

March 8, 2020  “Help Comes Beyond the Hills”  Lent 2
Genesis 12:1-9
Psalm 121:1-8
Romans 4:1-8, 13-17
John 3:1-17

Rescue. We’ve seen it happen in old time Westerns. Even in ancient times people waited for someone to come from the hills to bring rescue. We look up in our lives seeking rescue from tough economic times, worry over health issues and disability, we long for relief. The psalmist shares the One who brings lasting rescue.

March 15, 2020  “Worship for the Good of the Heart”  Lent 3
Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95:1-9
Romans 5:1-8
John 4:5-26

Read the Psalm and the morning service of Matins comes to mind. This is one of the most celebratory psalms in the Psalmody. Yet, curiously, toward the end of this passage, there comes a warning about hardening our hearts. Why? It’s a reminder to guard our hearts toward bitterness. What ruins true heart-felt worship? You got it—bitterness and a hard heart. Having trouble getting into worship these days? Hmmm…

March 22, 2020  “A Portion to Live On”  Lent 4
Isaiah 42:14-21
Psalm 142
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

When you find yourself in the desert of “no one cares” it begins a process of isolation that eventually erupts with all kinds of cries to God. Perhaps blame is laid on Him. It’s no fun. If somehow you could get just a little morsel of relief, a little acknowledgment, you’d feel a whole lot better. This psalm brings the hope and portion that you need.

March 29, 2020  “Waiting”  Lent 5
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:1-11
John 11:17-27, 38-53

Who like to wait? You’re told that a table won’t be ready for 45 minutes. Do you stick around? You pray to God for a long time with no answer. Do you stick around? If you do stay what is it that causes you to wait?
## 2019 Statistical Report
**January 5th-26th, 2020**

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<th>Week #</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Communion</th>
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Average **Weekly** Worship Attendance for Current **Calendar Year**: 133

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### WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE MARCH 2020

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God’s Blessings On You!
Bethany Lutheran Church

Church Council Meeting.......................................................March 2nd @ 4pm
LCMS CNH District Pastor Conference @ Bethany........March 3rd 8am-3pm
Elder Meeting........................................................................March 8th @11:30am
LWML Meeting........................................................................March 8th @12:30pm
Birthday Bunch @ BJ’s.............................................................March 10th @ 11:30am
Worship Committee.................................................................March 12th @ 7pm
Church Office Closed (teacher/staff in-service)...............March 27th
Preschool’s Spring Carnival @ Ualtis Campus.................March 28th 10am-1pm

Church Services at Bethany Lutheran Church

Sunday Services: 10 am Variety of Traditional and Contemporary (Communion 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays)

Bible Studies at Bethany

Sunday 9:00 am Sunday School—Classes for Everyone
         Adult Bible Studies
Monday 7:00 pm Women’s Bible Study
Wednesday 9:30 am Bible Study “Psalms” - Narthex
          5:00 pm “Ephesians” by Pastor Rittenbach