

## PASTOR'S PAGE

Dear Christian Friends,

How was your Easter? With sincere gratitude to Lee and Julie, we were able to record the Holy Week Services on Wednesday and Thursday. There is no doubt about it, it made the actual Easter Sunday anticlimactic. Though we celebrated Easter, we could not assemble due to the safer-at-home orders.

I'll have to relate a funny story about Easter though. I got up at about 5 am on Easter Sunday wide awake. So, I turned on the news and watched the Pope officiate a Mass and then I listened to his address. It was in Latin but it had an interpreter. The entire basilica was practically empty other than those who attend to the Pope. "Dear brothers and sisters, indifference, self-centeredness, division, and forgetfulness are not words we want to hear at this time. We want to ban these words forever. They seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us, that is, when we do not let the Lord Jesus triumph in our hearts and lives..." The Pope wanted to ban indifference, self-centeredness, division and forgetfulness forever. Good intention, except people by nature are indifferent, self-centered, divisive, and forgetful of God and their neighbor. Luther summarized these human negative qualities as the "Old Adam" that dwells in each of us.

Through the regeneration of the new man given to us by the Holy Spirit through baptism. We live in a sinful world. We live with these sinful eruptions: disease, pestilences, war, famine, flooding, and the like. We live in a fallen world. As much as we want to eradicate such outburst within ourselves and the world, it will never be done on this side of eternity. However, we are given the means to daily drown the "Old Adam". When this nature is drowned, the new-person springs forth with specifically, designed by God, given qualities which Paul describes in Galatians 5: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...During times like this, these qualities spring forth, even when we are struggling with those qualities that the Pope wanted to ban forever. The gifts of the Spirit motivated the Christian to spring into action. These gifts are God driven. God driven in fatally flawed human beings. When these actions spring forth, God the Holy Spirit is credited. This is the miracle of God working in us sinful followers of Christ.

Over these last few weeks, we see God the Holy Spirit working through Christians to help those who are suffering. This is done by donations to Christian medical teams, by Christians extending God's healing to our neighbor through a thoughtful note or e-card. These neighbors can be believers or non-believers. God is not indifferent to those in need. God's heart breaks because of our suffering. God loves all, even those who are ill. God's hands are found in every situation. God never sleeps. However, God uses such illnesses to bring about three things: 1) death to believer or non-believer; 2) physical healing to both; 3) Repentance to both. God uses illness or plagues to call all to Himself. Life is fragile. It sometimes takes a virus to wake us up from our false sense of "invincibility". Remember, God uses bad times to remove the scales from our own eyes. Our eyes are refocused on the crucified and risen Son of God. God's Son is calling us to His bosom with outstretched scarred hands.

I am always reminded by the account in Luke 17: *"On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' When he saw them,*

he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well." How many were healed? All ten? Jesus did not discriminate. He healed every one of them! Even though only one came back to praise and thank God. Faith will always reveal the source of the healing. It comes from the Lord!

In conclusion, after listening to the Pope, Julie and I listened to two Easter services. One from Perryville, MO where Nathan and Alicia are serving. The other was from Fraser, MI where Julie grew up. They were beautiful services. I love Easter music and sang all the hymns. However, I did something that I never thought I would do. After the sermon hymn, I listened to the opening Easter Text...The next thing I knew. I was awakened by an Easter hymn. I missed the sermon, not once, but twice. Jesus said to the disciples the night He was betrayed in the Garden: "The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!" I am absolutely sure that nobody at Bethany did what I did with one of my sermons? Not!!!! I guess I was good enough because I listened to the Pope! I stayed awake...I think Luther would have had a great laugh! I know Julie did.

I pray everything is going well with isolation. Soon, this shall pass and we will be back worshipping together.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Steele

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### **MAY/JUNE CHARITY OF THE MONTH – Vernacular Video Mission International (VVMi)**

"Whether hiking hours into mountain ranges or going by boat to small islands, the Gospel is being shared in remote areas of the Philippines through video and Scriptures and hundreds of people are responding and being discipled in places where the Lord has never before been praised." We can help by giving of our gifts to the May and June Mission of the Month. Our donations will be used to help purchase Bibles which have been translated and are printed in vernacular (heart) languages. Christian videos which have been dubbed into "heart" languages are also used to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Please be generous as you share in this important project.



### **\*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING SUMMER WORSHIP TIMES\*\*\***

The Elders approved changing the Sunday Summer worship time from 9:00am to **10:00am**. The Thursday 6:00pm services will begin on May 28 but the Sunday services will remain at 10:00am throughout the year. This will be in affect once the Safer-at-Home order is lifted.

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

As of this writing, we have celebrated Easter and our 111<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Bethany. Quite different than other years, as there wasn't any gathering, no cake or coffee celebrating the anniversary, but we did have the GOOD NEWS that Jesus Christ has Risen from the Dead. What comfort this message gives all of us who believe in Jesus as our true Lord and Savior. Some Lenten Services, Holy Week Services, and our Easter Service were done through Facebook and YouTube. Quite a difference from the usual trumpets blaring, our organ sounding the joy, and all of us singing praises to our Lord. Even though we could not worship and rejoice together, our Services were very inspiring. A big thank you to Pastor Steele and Julie for getting the message through Word and Song to all of us. Thank you, Lee Gumm, for producing and recording the Services in a very professional and Christian manner. I know Lee spent a lot of his time on these, as the upload time took in excess of 6 hours. As I mentioned in my remarks on Easter Sunday, even though we are not worshipping together, behind the scenes procedures are still be done and accomplished. I also mentioned the difficult decisions that our Elder group had to make. These were done to ensure everyone's safety, follow all the guidelines that were put into law by our Governor and Legislature. Bethany is not in the business to eliminate Services or cutback worship opportunities, but our mission is to increase our worship through Word and Song and offering the Hand of Christ to all. I look forward to the day we can all be together again, at Church, worshipping and Praising our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

One process we have been trying to do is keep communication to all our Members ongoing. The Elders have been communicating via email and telephone about Services and items of concern to all our members. If Bethany does not have your email address, please call Gina with that information. This month we will use "THE BEACON", to update everyone on "what's going on behind the scenes" at Bethany. I can tell you all that everything is being done to keep Bethany moving forward. With that in mind, thank you to everyone that has continued sending your contributions into Bethany. Our bills are being paid, and expenses are being cut where we can. Missions are still being collected and distributed. Your continued contributions are so important during this uncertain time.

In closing, please PRAY for Bethany, please PRAY for this virus to come to an end, please PRAY for Pastor Steele, please PRAY for all our members and their families, and above all, please PRAY that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ will bless us and keep us all safe. We WILL get through this, and I look forward to the day we will be together again in our beautiful Church worshipping our Lord. Yes, He is Risen, He is Risen indeed. Jesus is the answer. God's Blessings to all.

Robert (Bob) Wuerzberger

President, Bethany Church Council

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### MAY BIRTHDAYS

5-01: Annalise Hasler  
5-03: Steen Willadsen  
5-04: Traci Barthels  
Gary Bartz  
5-05: Dan Fibiger  
5-06: Austin Fibiger  
5-07: Julie Regutis  
5-11: Shirley Mueller  
Grace Matte



5-14 Marilyn Buell  
5-17: Ray Ottman  
Betsy Metscher  
5-19: Jeremy Paltzer  
5-20: Lexie Matte  
5-22: Joshua Yang  
5-26: Kristine Faucher  
5-29: Caroline Ney  
5-30: Ezekiel Johnson

### MAY ANNIVERSARIES

5-01: Bill & Julie Regutis  
Rev. Robert & Julie Steele  
5-11: Joe & Lori Wychesit  
5-26: Patrick & Rachel Johnson  
5-31: Bob & Karen Wuerzberger

If we missed a member's birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office and let us know.

## FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dear Members of Bethany,

This is a unique time for our Church and our Community, Safety is always our top priority and taking care of the wellbeing of our congregation, staff and charities continue to be at the forefront of our Mission. This report is to give you an update on the current status and actions we are taking to ensure financial health of our Church.

We are not at risk of being able to pay our bills. Due to your generosity and our fiscal responsibility, our cash accounts are at healthy levels; however, 87% of our cash is designated to specific accounts per the requests of the donors. Our Congregation has been trending towards more specific donations for projects such as the organ improvement, elevator, general improvement and special needs accounts. This appears to have reduced general fund donations. Our target is to have at least 2 months of general fund savings for budgeted items, however due to this giving trend and the reduced giving due in part to COVID-19, our savings only accounts for 1 month of budgeted items. While this is not a problem today, it can be a future risk to meeting the wishes of our donors and paying all our budgetary commitments. To make sure this risk does not become a problem, here is our plan.

**Cutting Costs:** We consider approximately 85% of our budget to be fixed commitments, allowing us to only flex about 15% of our spend with things like custodian needs, worship materials, certain hourly employee expenses, etc. These items can be temporarily suspended without major disruption. Here is a high level summary of the current plan:

- Payroll – Salaries continuing as scheduled; Hourly reduced to match demand
- Charities & Missions - Continuing as scheduled
- Projects – Committee discretion, reserved funds are still available
- Utilities & Insurance – Continuing as scheduled

**Seek CARES Act funds:** We are applying for the government's CARES Act funds (Paycheck Protection Program) that is intended for small businesses and not-for-profit organizations to get financial relief in the form of a forgivable loan. We are seeking these funds solely for the purpose of payroll and utility payments that will be forgivable, meaning we don't have to pay the loan back to the government.

**Continued Generosity:** That's you. As a congregation, we have been blessed by the support of all our members. During these tough times we find it even more important to support our mission at Bethany and your weekly offerings and contributions make the mission possible. If physically not attending Church has made giving difficult, please consider signing up for Bethany's e-giving program "Joyful Response". Even the slightest of additional support can go a long way.

If you have questions or are interested in seeing a more detailed report, please feel free to contact the Finance Committee or Treasurer. If you would like to sign up for "Joyful Response" e-giving, please see information below. There's so much going on at Bethany and tons to be proud of. If this virus has an impact, let the impact fall on the willingness and opportunities for people to receive and share God's word. That should be our goal.

Treasurer – Derek Mackenzie  
Board of Finance – Ben Marotz

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## OFFERINGS DURING THIS UNCERTAIN TIME

Thank you to those who have been mailing in and dropping off their offerings as well as those who have signed up for "Joyful Giving". Your offerings are crucial to the ministry at Bethany. As a reminder, here are the ways you can continue to support Bethany with your offerings:

- Mail offerings to: Bethany Lutheran Church  
222 Church St.  
Kohler, WI 53044
- Joyful Response: If you sign up for Joyful Response, your offerings are automatically withdrawn from your checking or savings account. If you would like an enrollment form, please contact the church office. Fill out the enrollment form and mail it back to church, along with a void check or deposit slip from your account. After things get back to normal, you can continue Joyful Response to make your giving easier or you can cancel at any time. If you have any questions, please call the church office number.

## INFORMATION REGARDING SERVICES

As we all know, the Safer-at-Home order has been extended. Please watch your email for information about when services will resume. In the meantime, we hope you all are enjoying the online services that are being recorded and put onto Facebook and YouTube. As a reminder, here are the ways you can find the services:

**Facebook:** Search *Bethany Lutheran Church – Kohler, WI* on Facebook. Once you are on our page, make sure to “Like” and “Follow”. The most recent service will be at the top of the newsfeed. Just keep scrolling down for past videos.

**YouTube:** Search *Bethany Lutheran Church Kohler* to find our YouTube page (you will see a circle with a picture of Bethany). When you click on the page, you should see a list of videos that Pastor Steele has recorded. The most recent will be at the top of the list.

**Website:** [www.bethanylutherankohler.org](http://www.bethanylutherankohler.org). The website is still in the process of being updated. I am waiting for the web designer to finish our page and as soon as it is up and running, I will send an email or announce it in a future bulletin or newsletter.

**New! - Email:** Starting this week, I will be emailing the link for the service to everyone on Saturday evenings. This will make it easy for you to open your email, click on the link, and the video will start to play. If I don't have your email address, please send it to [info@blckohler.com](mailto:info@blckohler.com).

If you have any questions about any of these options, please call the church office phone number (920-457-4681). I will be in the church office sporadically but I have the option to answer the phone remotely and am happy to help however I can.

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## FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Sunday School:** With the Safer-at-Home order being extended through May and schools being closed for the rest of the school year, Bethany Sunday School will not be meeting for the remainder of the year. The teachers want you to know how very disappointing it is that we are not going to see the students to finish up the school year. Sunday School Parents, please watch for an email with some resources for Bible learning and activities you can do at home.

**Confirmation Classes:** All confirmation classes are done for the year as well and will resume in the fall. Pastor's 8<sup>th</sup> grade confirmation students will be participating in a few “virtual” classes followed by a virtual examination. The confirmation ceremony will be held in church at a later date when we are able to meet again.

**Sunday School Mission Project:** This year's SS mission is Compassion International where we sponsored two children that are currently living in poverty. Esther is a 9-year-old girl from Uganda and Chris is a 5-year-old boy from Kenya. The offerings we collect for these children will help provide health monitoring and care, nutritional support, food, healthy recreation, educational and learning activities, and the opportunity to learn about Jesus. How can you help? The Sunday School students and families were planning on hosting one of the Soup Suppers to help raise money for these children. Since that was not able to happen, if you are interested in giving a donation to their mission, you can do so by sending it to church and mark it “Sunday School Mission”. Sunday School parents: watch for an email about how you can help your children write letters and draw pictures that will be sent to Esther and Chris. Thank you all for your support!

**Adult Bible Study:** All in person Bible studies are done for the year but there will be an online adult Bible Study starting Tuesday, April 28. See the report from the Board of Elders in this newsletter for more information.

## FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS

Dear members of Bethany,

The elders have been meeting frequently over the past month to discuss how to handle our worship schedule amidst this pandemic that has swept our nation. Our number one priority was the safety of our members, and with the orders from the governor to stay home, it helped make clear what our decision needed to be. To help keep getting the word out to the congregation, Pastor Steele has been making videos and posting them online on YouTube and Facebook. I'd like to personally thank Pastor, Julie, and Lee Gumm for the fantastic job they have been doing with these videos. I hope everyone has had a chance to watch them.

**Opportunity for Communion:** As we've continued to monitor the situation in Sheboygan County, we can see the number of COVID-19 cases have been very limited and the spread has been very slow. With the extension of the Safer-at-Home order prolonging our opportunity to gather here at church, we feel it was important to offer some worship opportunities at the church. That said, Pastor Steele will be holding small services, beginning this Sunday, where he will be doing the confession and absolution, a small reading, and communion. These services will begin at 10:00 AM this Sunday, April 26, and will run every half-hour for a single family or individual at each service. To attend one of these services, you must sign up by contacting Gina in the church office and she will assign you a time slot, as they will just be added every half hour in the order the requests are received (you will need to do this each week that you'd like to attend). Please be assured that Pastor Steele will be sanitizing everything between visits but if you are someone at high-risk, are showing symptoms, or just don't feel comfortable going out yet, we encourage you to remain home and continue following the safer-at-home orders.

**Adult Bible Study:** Another worship opportunity that we will be offering is an online Bible class on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 PM, starting April 28 led by Pastor Steele. Again, please sign up with Gina in the church office so she can get a list of attendees and Pastor will send out the study materials and link to the online class ahead of time.

*\*\*To sign up for Sunday services or for the Tuesday Bible Study please call the church office number, 920-457-4681, between 8am and 5pm or email the church at [info@blckohler.com](mailto:info@blckohler.com) any time (be sure to include the email address you would like Pastor to send the information to)\*\**

As we continue on this unprecedented journey together, I just want everyone to know that the elders are here to answer any questions or concerns regarding the church and how we are handling the situation. If you need to talk to an elder, below is their contact information and family assignments, so you know who to contact:

<b>Elder Name</b>	<b>Elder Phone #</b>	<b>Elder Family Assignment</b>
Brian Faucher	920-287-2085	Albert through Faucher
Andy Fibiger	920-912-7316	Fibiger through Hummitzch
David Hasler	319-541-7413	Johnson through Marotz
Steve Hazen	920-467-9459	Matte through Rouse
Jason Mengel	678-677-2154	Matte through Rouse
Shua Yang	920-254-0336	Sabrowsky through Yang

As your head elder, I welcome any calls if you would prefer to just talk with me as well.

I wish everyone the best of good health and God's blessings.

Thank you,  
Andy Fibiger  
Head Elder

### **THANK YOU FROM BETHANY'S THRIVENT COMMITTEE**

Many of you have taken the opportunity to Direct your Thrivent "Choice Dollars" to Bethany before the deadline of March 31st and we are very grateful. Thrivent gives its members this opportunity to share these earned dollars with a Non-Profit or Church of their choice before they are lost to taxes or Thrivent directs to their choice. We are Blessed as they help with Missions and Church functions at Bethany during the year. You can view each year in our Annual Report how these were directed.

Lynn Luebke, Mary Madden & Dave Prange – Thrivent Committee

## **LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The progress of Long Range Planning Committee projects have been delayed because of the Safer-at-Home policy instituted in Wisconsin. When Safer-at-Home is lifted, projects will be picked up again. Having said that there are still a few updates.

### **KITCHEN PROJECT:**

Initial estimates are being requested from a contractor for rough order of pricing. An LRPC meeting will be set up when Safer-at-Home is lifted to review the budget and determine next steps.

### **ORGAN DEDICATION:**

God willing, the organ dedication is currently planned for Sunday, June 21. On June 22-24, Luther Crest volunteers are planning to be at Bethany to help remove the platform in the balcony, so the organ can be centered in between the pipes to allow the organist to hear a balanced sound. The LRPC would like to sponsor a brat fry for the volunteers (mostly middle school aged kids). Phase 3, replacing 32 pipes for a tonal upgrade is on hold until Safer-at-Home is lifted.

God's blessings,

Todd Matte, Vice President

## **LHS AUCTION MOVING ONLINE ONLY**

Lutheran High's annual auction will be an Online Bidding Only auction over the weekend of May 16. Due to the current circumstances, LHS will not host the dinner portion or the preview night activities. Instead, a link will be posted on the LHS homepage in the near future and we hope that all supporters will enjoy viewing all auction items and bidding from the comfort of their homes. Please watch for details in the coming weeks.



### **BLESSINGS FROM LOVE INC!**

Together WE Thrive! This has been made very clear lately as Neighbors have come together across the country to be there for each other and extend acts of kindness. We believe this is an important time in our mission as we exist to "Help Churches – Help our Neighbors" thrive in the Name of Christ. We exist to identify and bring resources together because one church or agency cannot meet the overwhelming needs of our Community alone.

Even though the Love INC office remains closed, the staff is all working from home and any calls coming in are directed to the proper source and returned as quickly as possible. We have been doing Virtual Meetings on Zoom and continue to move forward the best we can with God's Hand in all we do.

If you get a chance, and have access to the Internet, please visit [www.loveincsheboygancounty.org](http://www.loveincsheboygancounty.org) and you can see what is happening and ways you can help if you like. The staff has weekly calls with United Way and together are trying to reach the needs of the County. If you are in need or know of someone in need please make it known by reaching out and being that Neighbor who cares.

As you will see, the other Love INC news included in our Newsletter is Katie Popp, our Executive Director, is relocating to Florida this Summer. We will all miss the leadership, dedication, and heart she put into Love INC. We now put our Faith in God's plan as we work through this change together.

Thank you for your support.....Sue Prange

*\*\*If you or someone you know would be interested in learning more about the Executive Director position at Love INC, you can visit their website at [loveincsheboygancounty.org](http://loveincsheboygancounty.org). On the home page, you will find a link to the job description. All replies should be submitted by May 15<sup>th</sup>\**

## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM LOVE INC**



Love INC  
Love In the Name of Christ  
of Sheboygan County

CELEBRATING **5** YEARS

*of God's Blessings*

### **2020 Board of Directors**

**Chris McKnight**

*Chair*

**Shirl Breunig**

*Vice Chair*

**Bill Horsch**

*Secretary*

**Jim Fasse**

*Treasurer*

**Paul Aparicio**

**Reed Beiersdorf**

**Paul Dirkse**

**David Kostichka**

**Tamara Remington**

**Brad Veenendaal**

**Todd Wittig**

**Katie Popp**

*Executive Director*

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff at Love INC of Sheboygan County, we are writing to inform you that Katie Popp has announced her resignation as Executive Director. After 6 years at Love INC, she will depart July 15th and relocate with her family to Florida.

Katie has been instrumental in the founding and success of this affiliate since its inception in 2014. During her tenure, Love INC established a united community of 40 churches and various nonprofit organizations with the spirit of organizing, promoting and intentionally mobilizing much needed services and support while meaningfully engaging with and supporting neighbors in need to reach their full potential.

After careful discernment, she has successfully started the natural evolution of Love INC into Transformational Ministry which is now navigating through its second year. Love INC National recognized this leadership in 2017 by selecting Love INC of Sheboygan County as a training site where Executive Directors from Kenya, Africa visited to study the practices led by Katie and her team.

Katie has expressed that even though her heart is full of mixed emotions, she continues to prayerfully listen to where God is calling her and her family.

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to our Awesome God, dedicated Board of Directors, Passionate Staff, Faith-Filled Salt of the Earth Volunteers and Churches, Generous Donors and to our Community for this opportunity to join arms together to form this life-changing Ministry. This Relational Ministry has the power to help our Neighbors move out of need and live the abundant life Christ has promised us. I believe Love INC of Sheboygan County is just getting started and I look forward to how God will continue to bless this Ministry that has already been a blessing to so many. Thank you for believing in me as your leader! I thank my God every time I remember you. Philippians 1:3"

The Board has named a search committee to find the next leader of Love INC of Sheboygan County.

This will certainly be a time of transition and discernment for this organization, its employees and volunteers, the potential candidates, and our neighbors who benefit from our support. Please pray for us and wherever possible offer support to ensure we can maintain the momentum Katie ignited to serve and transform lives. Join us also in praising the Lord for Katie's dedication to the ministry of Love INC and in praying for her as she begins her next journey.

Faithfully,

Board of Directors  
Love INC of Sheboygan County

