



## *The Church in March 2021*

I was visiting with my son, Nate, on a Friday afternoon when Pastor Collette sent me a text saying the governor had just declared a state of emergency. A few nights before, we had gathered for dinner in the church basement as we did every Wednesday, with our neighborhood friends and our church family, and then upstairs for Lenten worship. I got home that night to see an NBA game cancelled, and awoke the next day to the news that Tom Hanks and his wife were infected with the Coronavirus. Pastor Collette and I discussed whether to worship together, and that Sunday, used an iPhone to stream worship to you from an empty church for the first time.

What a year it has been. I am most thankful for God's faithfulness to us. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. I am most thankful for you, your prayers, support, help, and kindness. I figured we would get from the wilderness to the promised land, from the cross to the resurrection, eventually — I never imagined it was going to take this long. I knew we would get there because of God's faithfulness, and because of you.

We are not there yet. A few days after my parents received their first vaccine shot, they tested positive for the virus. Thankfully, they are both fine as I write. As more of you receive your second shot and feel confident in going out, we hope to see you back in worship again. Also, if you are at home, and feel safe to have a visit after your vaccination, give me a call. I would love to see you in person to pray with you and bring you communion.

As we begin Lent, I have been reflecting on Jesus setting his face to Jerusalem to meet sin and death head on, and to overcome it with his suffering love. Jesus takes us with him on this journey. I am glad I am on it with you.

~ **Pr. Jay**



Turn your clocks ahead before going to bed on Saturday, March 13!

Time to Spring Ahead



*March 28*

Bethlehem Mankato presents: **And WHO is my NEIGHBOR?**  
TALKING ABOUT RACE AND RACIAL EQUITY

A Lenten series based on the LSS small group guide of the same name

## SCHEDULE OF LENTEN WORSHIP & DISCUSSIONS

<u>Wed. Night</u>	<u>Forum:</u>	<u>Wed. AM</u>	<u>Wed. PM</u>
<u>Worship</u>	<u>Partners for</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Discussion</u>
6pm, Live & Online	<u>Housing</u>	10:30am, Zoom	6:45pm, Zoom
Feb. 17, 24, Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24	7pm, Zoom, Feb. 24	Feb. 24, Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24	Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24

MORE DETAILS AT [BLCMANKATO.ORG/LENT](http://BLCMANKATO.ORG/LENT)



**Connections Ministry & Shelter**  
Bethlehem's days to serve are March 1-7. The link to sign up, as well as more information, can be found on our website. Please sign up as soon as you are able.

**40 Together — 1 Body, 1 Dollar, 40 Days**

- 1 Body:** The SE MN Synod of the ELCA hopes to use the power of story to connect the people of the Bethlehem faith community to our ministry partners in Tanzania, Colombia, and along the United States/Mexico border.
- 1 Dollar:** Bethlehem is requested to consider contributing \$1 for every member to support education, healthcare, and hunger relief in the lives of our global partners. Bethlehem's contribution is still to be determined.
- 40 Days:** Throughout the 40 days of Lent, the synod will provide video and written resources that will highlight the ways the Holy Spirit is already at work in the lives of these global partners.

Here are the "highlights" of the Bethlehem Council meeting held on **February 16**. Meeting minutes with details are posted at [www.blcmankato.org](http://www.blcmankato.org) and are also available in the church office notebook. Visit with Council members with questions and concerns! We welcome your conversation & feedback!

**Monthly Financial Report:** 2021 started with overall positive financial news. The January 31 report showed a small deficit of -\$93.08. Several 2021 pledges were received in full and will be applied month by month during the year. The PPP loan forgiveness application was approved by the government based upon our appropriate use of the funds for salaries, utilities and mortgage payments during 2020.

**Surplus Funds Allocation:** The **\$100,000 surplus** from 2020 was allocated as follows: **\$86,600** to mortgage reduction to buy another year of payments into 2023. This will buy time to develop the new strategic plan and coordinate this with a longer-term mortgage plan. The remaining **\$13,656** will be designated for personnel to meet additional staffing costs for this summer's sabbatical leave (interim pastor) and to reinstate a Family Faith Formation support staff position.

**Facilities:** New carpeting for Grounds for Joy and the adjoining hallway has been approved and will be installed soon. Research continues on options for new floor tile for the basement hallways with bids and styles being reviewed.

**Reconciling Works Donation:** \$1,000 was approved as a donation to the national organization that supports Reconciling in Christ initiatives by churches. This group provided invaluable assistance to BLC in the development of our welcoming resolution and generating awareness of this subject.

**Music Support Specialist:** The job description for this new BLC music position was approved. Charlie Leftridge will work with Laurie Rossow to support various regular and special music initiatives at Bethlehem during the year.

**Personnel Committee:** The 2021-22 BLC Personnel Committee was approved based upon 2 members continuing terms of service and the change in BLC officers next year.

**Finance Committee:** Diana Olson was approved to the open position on this committee for three years.

**Financial Review:** The process for reviewing the 2020 BLC finances has been initiated with Frank Larsen, Mark Larsen, Kristine Rebelein and Elizabeth Ruiz. The first step will involve a meeting in February/March to assess the 2020 finances & develop a report for the Council and Finance Committee.

**Connections Ministry Shelter Church:** Approval was given for use of the BLC back parking lot from April 4 to the end of August to provide a Sunday evening meal and conduct worship services for Connections guests and others. This makes BLC the first church partner for the new Shelter Church.

**40 Together: 1 Body, 1 Dollar, 40 Days:** Endorsement and support of the SE MN Synod Lenten initiative was approved. It will connect BLC and other synod congregations with our partners in Tanzania and Colombia as well as along the United States/Mexico border. Stay tuned for more details!

**Next Council Meeting:** Tuesday, March 16.



**HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS:**

Scholarships Available! The Endowment Board encourages you to apply for a scholarship from Bethlehem's Endowment Fund. Applicants must be Bethlehem members. Scholarships are awarded for a maximum of five years during undergraduate studies. This year's application will be available later in March and must be received **by May 1**.

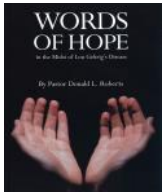
These scholarships are possible because of the generosity of past and present Bethlehem members who have contributed to the Endowment Fund. Call Susan Brown (387-2976) with any questions.





# Pastor Don's Devotion

*Pastor Don Roberts served as pastor from 1989-1996. He was diagnosed with ALS in 1995, and continues to be an inspiration of life & faith to our congregation.*



***And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins. ~ Romans 11:27***

God never breaks God's covenant. God makes God's covenant with us. The covenant is to forgive our sins. When we sin (as all of us do), we should feel guilty. But when we take our sins to the Lord, we are showered with grace and forgiveness. In Jesus, we can live a guilt-free life. We are in Lent. The focus of Lent is the cross. The cross prepares us for Easter and Jesus' glorious resurrection. You cannot have a resurrection without a death. It happened for Jesus and will happen for all of us. We all die. In John 14:19, Jesus told his disciples, "In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live." We can rejoice in this good news.

Serve the Lord in response to this good news of Jesus Christ. None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something. All of us have talents to share with the community of believers. Let's use them to share the love of Jesus.



## Financial Report

NOTES FROM ELIZABETH RUIZ, FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Due to the continuing generosity of the members of Bethlehem, the general fund balance at the end of January was a \$93 deficit. This is wonderful news at a time of year when some bills, such as utilities, are at their highest. Year-end contribution reports were sent out in mid-January to those with an e-mail address in the Breeze system. For those who specifically requested a paper copy, those were mailed at the end of January. If you need a copy of your contribution report, please let the church office know. Also, if you requested offering envelopes, they are waiting for you at church. If you are not able to pick them up, please advise the church office.

## FAMILY LIGHT

***Kids, grab a grown-up and join us this March!***

- **2/28: Sledding** at Spring Lake Park Hill (11am-12pm)
  - Return your fleece blanket service project by this date!
- **3/7:** Our last Zoom **Compassion Camp** (11-11:30 am)
- **3/13: Pajama Storytime w/ Miss Anna** on Zoom (8-8:15 pm)
- **3/14: Pajama Sunday!** Kids, wear your PJs and join us for a scavenger hunt during 9:45 am worship. Afterwards, we'll hop on Zoom for a pajama party at 11am.
- **3/21: Outdoor LIGHT Returns!** Location TBD (11am-11:30am)
- **3/28:** Join us for an outdoor **Walk Through Holy Week** event at church to celebrate Palm Sunday. (11-11:30am)

### **Gert DeRemer**

***will be 103  
on March 22!  
If you'd like to  
send Gert a  
birthday greeting,  
her address is:***



***Oak Terrace Assisted Living  
1575 Hoover Drive ~ #147  
North Mankato, MN 56003***

## CONFIRMATION

***We will continue to meet  
online weekly during Lent***

**Join us on Zoom after 6pm worship**

*February 17th - March 24th*

**6:45-7 pm: Confirmation Check-In w/ Anna**

**7-7:30 pm: Youth Group**

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
720 South Second Street  
Mankato, MN 56001

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

(507) 388-2925  
blchurch@blcmankato.org

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MANKATO, MN



*A Reconciling in Christ  
Congregation*

Pastor Jay Dahlvang: 507-469-3792  
pastorjay@blcmankato.org

Pastor Collette Broady Grund: 507-380-3049  
pastorcollette@blcmankato.org



@bethlehem.mankato

**Church Calendar-Winter/Spring 2021**

**WORSHIP TIME**

Sunday, 9:45am  
Sanctuary & Online  
ONLINE SERVICE WILL BE  
STREAMED LIVE ON  
FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE &  
PLAYED ON KTOE RADIO AT  
11AM.

**BIBLE & BOOK  
STUDIES**

Every Tues., 7:00am  
LECTIONARY\*  
Every Wed., 10:30am  
BOOK OF FAITH\*  
2nd /4th Wed., 3:30pm  
WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB\*  
2nd Thurs., 6:30pm  
LIFE IN THE SPIRIT\*

**SMALL GROUPS**

3rd Thurs., 6:30pm  
EVE CIRCLE, FOR  
MOMS OF YOUNG  
KIDS\*  
3rd Sat., 9:00am  
DEBORAH CIRCLE\*

**BOARDS &  
COMMITTEES**

All boards &  
committees are  
meeting at their usual  
times on Zoom.  
CONNECT WITH YOUR  
GROUP VIA EMAIL FOR  
DETAILS.

**MORE INFO:**

Looking to get  
involved? Contact the  
office.  
SEE THE FAMILY  
FAITH FORMATION  
PAGE FOR THEIR  
SCHEDULE.  
(\*Denotes meeting  
on Zoom)

All Calendar details can be found on the website at [blcmankato.org/calendar](http://blcmankato.org/calendar).



**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

*Bethlehem is an inviting community that is growing in Christ,  
loving our neighbors, and serving God's world.*

*The deadline for submitting newsletter articles is the 15th of each month.*

