

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 2:30 PM Closed Friday
Office Telephone: (406) 761-1543 Website: www.bethelmt.org

BETHEL NOTES

Sunday

March 29

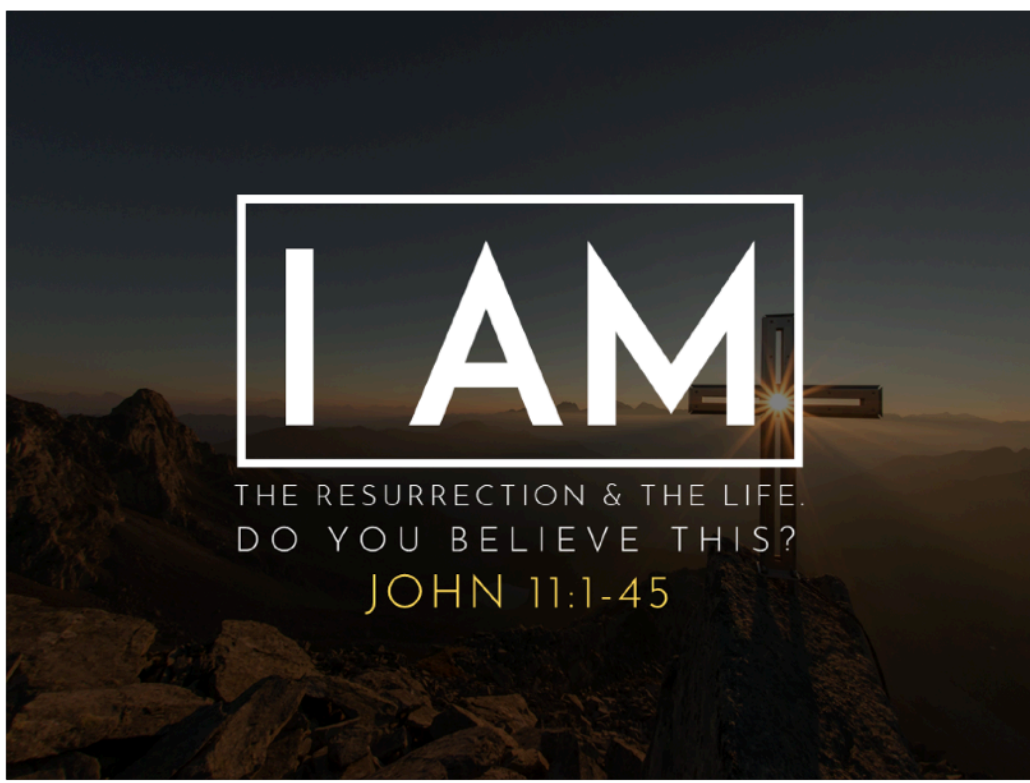
Readings Fifth
Sunday of Lent

EZEKIEL
37:1-14

PSALM 130

ROMANS
8:6-11

JOHN
11:1-45



This Sunday we celebrate the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

This week's Sunday Worship Service will be a live stream from Croxford's Funeral Home led by Great Falls ELCA Pastors and LPA 9:30 AM. Click the link here or go to our website www.croxfordfuneralhome.com click on "Live Church Services" right on their homepage Sunday morning to connect. There will be a Children's message included in the service. Share this with your family and friends.

For those who do not have access to the internet, we will be sending a copy of the bulletin. If you would like a written copy of Pastor Scott's sermon, please call the Bethel Office 406-761-1543 and we will mail one to you after Sunday. Blessings and prayers to all.



- ◆ Prayers for **Faith Crouch** (granddaughter of Bernice Johnson) who is awaiting a double lung transplant.
- ◆ Prayers of healing **Ed Pottratz** as he continues cancer treatment.
- ◆ Prayers of healing for **Lee Klette**, son of Russ & Cheryl.
- ◆ Continued prayers for **Angela Mart** (daughter-in-law of Jane Mart) as she finishes treatment for breast cancer.
- ◆ Prayers for God's presence and healing for **Linda Juvik** (sister of Sandy Bechard) as she continues treatment for cancer.
- ◆ Prayers of healing for **Cindy Brattain** as she recovers from a medical procedure.
- ◆ Prayers of health and healing for **Don Seyfert** as he recovers after medical treatment.
- ◆ Prayers for God's presence and healing touch for **John Korpela**, as he recovers after medical treatment.
- ◆ Prayers for the **Peoples of Boliva** as they transition into new leadership within the country and prayers for **Pastor Presidente German and the IELB**.
- ◆ Prayers for healing and strength for **Katie Madsen**, niece of Doug Sexe and granddaughter of Arlene Sexe as she is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- ◆ Prayers of healing for **Jane Mart** as she is home and continues to heal after surgery.
- ◆ Prayers of healing and support for **Jeremy Hawks** as he prepares for surgery.
- ◆ Prayers of healing and strength for **Ann Tuomi** as she continues to recover from surgery.
- ◆ Prayers for safety and support for **Eric Poser**, Connie Titcomb's nephew as he is deployed overseas.
- ◆ Prayers for **Dakota Green**, great granddaughter of Bernice Johnson as she recovers from a recent surgery.
- ◆ Prayers for God's healing presence and peace for **Arlena Crandell's son, Mike**, who is undergoing medical exams.
- ◆ Prayers of healing for **Leonard Murphy** as he recovers at home from a recent hospitalization.
- ◆ Prayers of healing for **Marlys Baer** as she recovers from a recent hospitalization.
- ◆ Prayers of healing for **Dale Ost** as he recovers at home.
- ◆ Prayers of healing and God's presence for **Chad Erickson** as he continues medical testing.
- ◆ Prayers for God's presence, peace & strength for **Jim and Loretta Nuessle and their son** (brother, sister-in-law, and nephew of Walt Nuessle) as they face health concerns and for a safe return to their home in MN.
- ◆ Prayers for God's presence, healing & grace for **Bob Norbie** (Mary Lou) as he faces a diagnosis of bladder cancer.
- ◆ Prayers for God's healing presence and mercy for all who face the threat of the Covid-19 virus at home and abroad.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Join us for fun and engaging conversation, and insightful discussion of this week's Lectionary texts as we meet through a social distancing approved Zoom video call each Tuesday morning from 7:00 – 8:00 am. Breakfast recipes and ideas will be provided. If you are interested in more information or would like to be added to the call invitation list, click on the email link below and type "breakfast" into the subject line (and then of course press send).



dscholten@dlsconsulting.net

Entering the Passion of Jesus Book Study to Continue on Zoom

Monday Evenings

6:30 pm

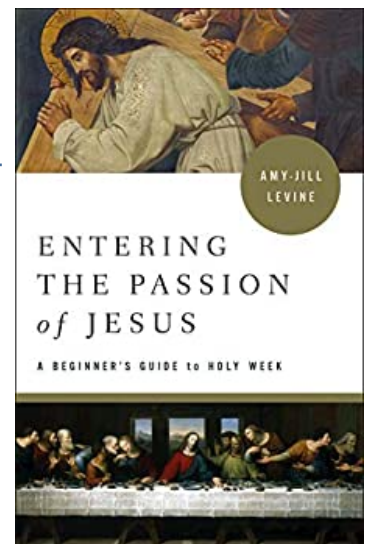
We will be continuing on with our book study with Chapter 5 The Last Supper: Risking the Loss of Friends. If you do not have the book and would like to participate the following passages will be discussed:

- John 13:5-9
- Exodus 12:21-28
- Mark 14:66-72

Session Goals

- Connect to Gospel narratives of the Last Supper to Old Testament traditions of Passover ash sacrificial system.
- Appreciate the complexity of two major characters scion story —Peter and Judas.
- Reflect on foot washing as an act of humble service.
- Consider our own responses to injustice and our impulse to give and receive service.

If you would like to participate in the study please email Pastor Steve at bethelgf.pastor.steve@gmail.com and request the link to the book study. The link will include instructions to download Zoom and connect to the meeting.



Gracious God, it is good for us to gather as your beloved in community. We treasure your presence with us in word and meal, song and prayer. Be with us in these days when gathering together as often as we would like is not possible. When we must be apart for reasons of safety, we trust that you surround us with your sheltering wings. Encourage us in connecting as we are able, reaching out to our neighbors in need and being persistent in prayer. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our constant companion.
Amen.

source elca.org

WORDS FROM THE BISHOP: FOLLOW JESUS AND BREATHE

“Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath (spirit) to enter you, and you shall live. (Ezekiel 37:5)

I’ve been thinking a lot about breathing these days. I picture those people with the Covid-19 virus trying to suck breath into their lungs, with or without ventilators. I think about the doctors, nurses and other health care workers having to breathe through masks all day...or not being able to breathe through them because of the shortage. I breathe in a deep lungful of fresh Montana air as I walk, thanking God that I can breathe. Even the planet is breathing easier as the pollution levels have dropped drastically around various parts of the globe.

Breathing, the in and out of air through our lungs into all parts of our bodies, is central to life as we know it. Without breathing we die.

In the ancient Hebrew language as well as ancient Greek, the words for breath and spirit are the same word. (Heb: *ruah*; Gk: *pneuma*) God breathed spirit into the first human and there was new life. God continues to breathe the Spirit into us so that we may have new life again and again in Christ.

In this time, we need to breathe. Yes, physically of course. But spiritually, mentally, emotionally as well. We need to just stop and breathe. Slowly, deeply, gratefully taking each breath as a gift of life from God. Take a moment now and pay attention to your breath and say, “thank you, God, for your breath of life.”

Remember though that as followers of Christ, the life of breathing in the Spirit is a life of love, a life of hope, a life of kindness to others. The Spirit’s breath breathed into us in our baptism gives us the strength and courage to love our neighbor as ourselves.



One way of supporting and caring for the breath of others right now is to avoid sharing your breath with them. Six feet is the furthest those tiny virus nuclei can travel, so staying out of that range is important. That is why I am still strongly recommending that ***all worship services or activities for which congregations gather (ex. Lent suppers, Bible studies, fellowship times, non-essential congregation meetings, etc.) be suspended and/or postponed for the time being, most likely until after Easter.*** We will continue to assess the situation but start planning how you might do Holy Week and Easter in ways that protect, nurture and care for the breath of life in our neighbors.

Another way you can care for the breath of others is to support our health care workers by sewing masks and gowns. Get your quilting groups and sewing clubs working (in their homes) to sew masks that our hospitals and clinics can use to protect themselves and their patients. Be sure to follow the specifications that they are asking for by looking on the hospital or clinic website. **(For example, the**

Great Falls clinic has this link)

Also, as spring arrives and many of you think about gardens, consider planting a crop of vegetables the excess of which you can share with your local food banks. Providing fresh produce grown with love in the Montana and Wyoming soil and air is a great way to serve the breath of life in your neighbor. During WWI and WWII these were called victory gardens. Perhaps now we can call them Spirit gardens.

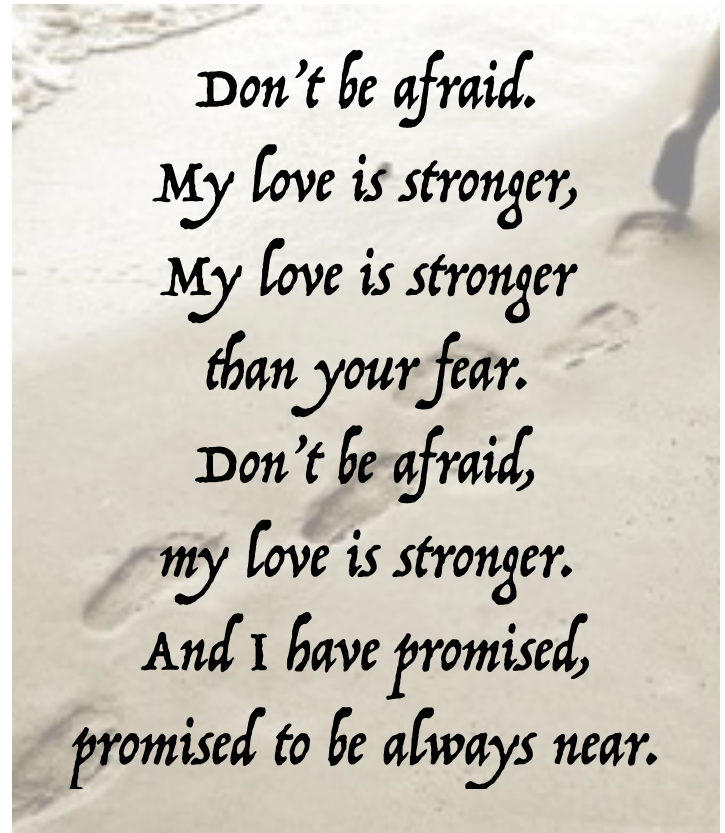
There are many ways in your local communities to support the breath of life in others; open your spirit to the Spirit’s working in you to discover what other ways you might serve.

And then come back to the source of your breath, to the God of your creation, the Christ who heals you, and inspiration of the Spirit. Refresh your hearts, souls and minds in the diverse worship, prayer, and Christ-centered opportunities provided by your congregations so that you can breathe in the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is your spirit's respirator, inspiring you with God's comfort, courage and hope now and always. So don't forget to stop and breath with Jesus this week and "Receive the holy Spirit."

"When he had said this, Jesus breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22)

Bishop Laurie

(Thanks to Pastor Andy Wendal for sharing a bit of humor with the moose pic.)



Thank you Bethel for all the cards, well wishes, love and prayers.

Bethel has been a part of our life for over 40 years and was especially felt these last six months and we are so appreciative. Thank you.

We first started attending Bethel when we were expecting our son Brett way back in 1978. Bethel has been there for us for both of Terry's battles and survival with breast cancer, John's pancreatic attacks and now with John's fight against bladder cancer. Bethel has uplifted us when we lost loved ones and rejoiced with us when we welcomed grandchildren and celebrated marriages. We are blessed ten times over with the prayers, love and friendship poured out to us over these many years and especially now.

We thank you for the blessings bestowed upon us. Blessings too numerous to mention. We thank you for our Bethel family and their outreach to community. We thank you for the friendships we have made, the memories, the good times, the bad, the tears shed alone and together. We thank you for our time of worship together. We thank you for the music. We thank you for the small groups and committees that allow us to gather together. We thank you for Pastor Steve and Kaye. We thank you for Tami who keeps us all in communication with each other.

During this time of social distancing and Lent let us all remember we are there for each other - near or far apart. Pray for our community - those working so hard to keep us healthy, fed, and educated. We know that we are not alone in this journey just as Jesus was not alone on his road to the cross. We feel your love and we thank you.

Terry and John Korpela

STAYING CONNECTED..AMIDST ISOLATING TIMES

We are living in a time unlike no other. Fear, isolation, and uncertainty are among our constant companions. Our coping skills have been put the test by these companions. The walls of our homes seem to be closing in on us and causing us to go stir crazy. These times call on each of us to look for new ways to stay connected and to experience community, and hope.

The gospel assigned for this Sunday, the Fifth (and last) Sunday in the season of Lent is the long narrative from John's gospel about the death and resurrection of Lazarus of Bethany. It is filled with the threat of death and death itself. Each of the characters in the story are filled with a potful of emotions not unlike those we are feeling today. Fear. Disappointment. Despair. Grief. Uncertainty. Separation. Isolation. (You can't get any more isolated than sealed in a burial tomb as was Lazarus) Yet, faith, love and hope are witnessed there, too.

Both Martha and her sister Mary expressed their disappointment to Jesus when he finally arrived at their home and walked right into their loss and grief, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." But in their responses we also see the gift of faith juxtaposed with their disappointment. "But even now I know that God will give you (Jesus) whatever you ask of him." Here faith and disappointment co-exist. Then comes Jesus' bold proclamation, "Your brother will rise again." The hope of life. Resurrection life. The promise of being reunited again with loved ones like it was before but perhaps different, too.

We are longing to see things return to the way they were before, but might it also be in a different way. We have and will have stories to tell of the loss of community, work, finances, school, youth group, sports, social life, etc. But also I trust we will have stories to share of the community coming together to help one another, our most vulnerable ones among us. Stories of more time spent with each other and conversations of what is most important to us. The most important people in our lives. A deeper faith which is born out of crisis, loss and adversity?



In these times, I encourage us to look for ways that we might bring hope, life, and love to each other. If someone comes to mind...write them a letter...call them on the phone and leave a voice message. Text. Email. Pray. Be creative.

Even though we are not going to be gathering together for worship on Sundays, as we were accustomed to, connect to the worship which is being offered this Sunday via the live-stream at 9:30am from Croxford's Funeral Home. If you need help to figure out how to do this, reach out to the church, to Tami or myself, or a friend from church. We would love to help get and keep you connected. Listen to the service over a phone call with someone who is planning on streaming it and would be glad to share it with you. Talk with one another after the service. Create your own coffee/fellowship hour. On Monday nights at 6:30pm we are continuing the Lenten Book/Study "Entering the Passion," on a Zoom/online connection. If you would like to join in, please reach out to me bethelgf.pastor.steve@gmail.com or call me at 406-781-2232 and give me your email address and I will add you to the group. The Bethel Notes has an invitation from the Men's Breakfast Group for you to join them as well.

In love, Jesus chose to connect with the world. With his good friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. So it is that love finds a way for each of us to be connected to God, each other and the world.

Shalom, Pastor Steve

A LETTER TO BETHEL

Thank You!

Dear Friends at Bethel,

One of the great things about retiring was that Turner and I were able to be at Bethel again regularly. We are fed by our connection with our congregation. So when we made the difficult decision last week to stay home from all public gatherings, we also made the decision to send a check to Bethel for the rest of the month.

Whether we are present or not, the church's expenses continue. Salaries, utilities, support of other ministries (including the synod) do not stop just because we are not there. We will continue to send in our monthly pledge check regardless of whether services are taking place or not, regardless of whether we are there or not. Even if you haven't made a specific pledge, I invite you to continue giving regularly to Bethel. You can send a check, or do it electronically. And I invite you to continue to be generous with food for local schools. When you go grocery shopping, get some items that you can drop off at the local school, so that children and families do not go hungry.

Thanks! We miss you!

Jessica Crist and Turner Graybill

As you are aware, Pastor Steve and our staff continue to work to meet the growing needs of our congregation, community and indeed the world. I am amazed at the ingenuity of our staff and synod members as they work to bring the church and the word of God to us through this unprecedented time. I want to thank all of those members of our congregation who continue to send in their weekly offering checks in continued support of our church budget via mail or through our giving portal. For those who were wondering how to give during this time of social distancing, please consider sending in your contribution through our giving portal at the church website at <https://www.bethelmt.org/online-giving.html>.

God bless you and keep you safe in this uncertain time.

Doug Sexe, Council President

Family Promise Update During Covid 19 Social Distancing

1) HELP WITH HOTEL FUNDS/MEALS FOR THE FAMILY

We still need some assistance with hotel funds for our family of four in quarantine, as well as meals. If you or any of your volunteers are interested in helping with this, we have included a button below that says "HELP WITH HOTEL FUNDS". If you are interested in assisting with lunches or dinners, please contact D.J. Lott at (406) 217-8401 or djlottjr@familypromisegf.org

2) HELP WITH "HELP US MOVE IN"

If any volunteers are interested in supporting us, we have decided to take part in Family Promise's #FPEmergencyRelief fundraiser. All funds raised through this giving platform (which will be open from March 25-April 1) will go towards Help Us Move In, our eviction prevention program, which we expect will be sorely needed in the weeks and months to come. We've included the link on the button below labelled "HELP US MOVE IN".

Holy Week Schedule

**THIS IS A TENTATIVE PLAN...
PLEASE NOTE THIS CAN CHANGE.**

**Palm Sunday April 5th
9:30 AM**

**Maundy Thursday April 9th
7:00 PM**

**Good Friday April 10th
7:00 PM**

**Easter Vigil April 11th
7:00 PM**

**Easter Sunday April 12th
Worship Service in the Gathering
Place 10:00 AM**



Our Mission Endowment Committee Bringing Education To Bethel

**Will be rescheduled. We look
forward to this education
opportunity.**

If you are interested in how we might "do church" differently for the 21st Century or if you are concerned about the sustainability of the Church in future generations, please come and be a part of the conversations and solution.

The Mission Endowment Committee has invited Dr. Jan Zimbleman to Bethel to give a workshop on the relationship between the Church and western culture, contrasting the 20th and 21st Centuries, and the differences in faith and world views between generations.

Bethel will host Dr. Jan, but this will be presented to congregations throughout the Synod via Zoom, a web conferencing technology. **Date to be determined.**

UPCOMING EVENT

**Church Potluck
Date To Be Determined
At Bethel after Sunday Service**

Get your best church potluck recipe ready. When this social distancing storm has passed and we are once again gathering for Sunday Services we will be having a HUGE POTLUCK immediately following our service!