

BETHEL NOTES



The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sunday, July 12th
6th Sunday after Pentecost

ZECHARIAH 9:9-12

PSALM 145:8-14

ROMANS 7:15-25A

MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30

Serving this Sunday

ACCOMPANIST

LYNN RYAN

LAY ASSISTANT

ANNE VANNATTA

USHERS

EARL TERWILLIGER

WALT NUESSE

PROJECTIONIST

TIM LIGHTBOURNE

TECH

ADAM ELKIN

COUNTERS

PATTY BRAGET

ANNE VANNATTA

This Sunday at Bethel we celebrate the 6th Sunday after Pentecost.

Welcome and thank you to **Jim Carlson, LPA** as he is preaches this Sunday. Interim Pastor Trina Johnsten will begin in the Office on July 15th and her first Sunday with us will be July 19th.

Please read the Reopening Guidelines on page 6. Masks are required.

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY 9:00 AM TO 2:30 PM CLOSED FRIDAY

OFFICE TELEPHONE: (406) 761-1543 WEBSITE: WWW.BETHELMT.ORG EMAIL: BETHELGF.CHURCH@GMAIL.COM



- ✦ 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 completes her treatments for cancer.
- ✦ Prayers for the **Peoples of Boliva** as they transition into new leadership within the country and prayers for **Pastor Presidente German and the IELB** especially during this pandemic and the increased need of the peoples.
- ✦ 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 and support for **Jeremy Hawks** as he prepares for surgery.
- ✦ Prayers for safety and support for **Eric Poser**, Connie Titcomb's nephew as he is deployed overseas.
- ✦ Prayers for God's presence, healing & grace for **Bob Norbie** as he continues treatment for bladder cancer.
- ✦ Prayers of support and good health for **RN's Katie and Kelsey**, daughters of Grant and Janet Smith.
- ✦ Prayers of healing, strength and support for **Rita Johnson (LaRae Veitch's sister)** as she continues treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- ✦ Prayers for healing for **Steve Young** (brother of Sue Hesse) as he recovers from back surgery.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Cindy Brattain** as she recovers from a heart procedure.
- ✦ Prayers of welcome to **Interim Pastor Trina Johnsten** as she picks up the mantle and preaches and presides during this period of change.
- ✦ Prayers of support and guidance for **Bethel Congregation** as we move forward and receive a new pastor.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Sharon Bossie** who is undergoing medical testing for severe back pain.
- ✦ Prayers of healing and health for **Liz Crabtree** as she recovers from hip surgery.
- ✦ Prayers of healing for **Adam Elkin** as he goes in for a second surgery on his foot on July 14th.
- ✦ Prayers for safe travels and joyous time at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp to **Steve Nelson** as he heads over from the 17th to 19th to lead family retreat bible study.



From Sonja Baumgardner

Pastor Trina Johnsten, Welcome to Bethel!

The Reverend Trina Johnsten was born and raised in Great Falls, Montana, graduating from Great Falls High School in 1985. She attended St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN) majoring in English and Religion, and then spent nine years serving in the areas of Admissions and Financial Aid at several colleges, including her alma mater.



In 1998 she married Dennis Trotter and began an M.Div. at Wartburg Theological Seminary (Dubuque, IA), two really good decisions in one year! Since graduating, she has served parishes in Pennsylvania, Nebraska, California and Montana, garnering experience in both rural and urban ministry, as well as doing work as a chaplain and interim pastor. In all her calls Rev. Johnsten has been a strong advocate for Lutheran Outdoor Ministry, serving on the board for El Camino Pines in southern California and as an advisor at Christikon in Montana, where she worked as a counselor during college.

Her most recent call was as the Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment at United Lutheran Seminary (Philadelphia, PA), where Dennis also served as the Chief Operating Officer. Since returning to Montana in the summer of 2019, Rev. Johnsten finished out Bishop Jungling's interim ministry at Gold Hill in Butte and is now looking forward to her time at Bethel. She and Dennis enjoy biking, lifting weights, fishing, hiking, reading, music and time with family, particularly their two nieces here in Great Falls and their four grandchildren in Bellingham, Washington.

Please join us after worship on Sunday, July 19th on the patio at Bethel for a meet and greet opportunity immediately following our worship service.

Wanted: Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp Representatives



As many of you know, Stephanie and Dan Richardson, our current FLBC representatives, are moving to Helena. Therefore, we are looking for two volunteers to become our Bethel Reps. The job entails being a liaison between our congregation and our beautiful camp located on the shores of Flathead Lake. The representatives are our voting board members and are asked to attend the Fall Annual Meeting at FLBC

which is usually held in October of each year. The representatives are also asked to report news from the camp and help Bethel participate in FLBC fund raisers. If you are interested in filling this rewarding position, please contact Jim Carlson (868-9045).

Words from the Bishop: I Am Not God

What are the most freeing words ever spoken to you? For me, the words that give me the most freedom in life are, "I am not God." And a close second are the words, "And I don't have to be God."

"I am not God and I don't have to be God." Those words have freed me from myself and my need to fix things for people, from my need to save them from their pain, from my need to make everything right for everybody. Ask the congregations I served as an interim...what they heard on my first Sunday was this: "I'm not Jesus and I'm not here to save your congregation. Jesus has already done that."

As a leader, even as a follower of Christ, not being weighed down by the expectations placed on me by myself and by others and letting God be God so that I don't have to – that's the greatest experience of freedom I can have because it allows me the freedom to focus on what I *can* do and be. I'm now free to be who Jesus calls me to be and to do what Jesus calls me to do.

However, being a human being who is not God and who doesn't have to try be God does not mean that I get to abdicate my responsibility as someone created in God's image. I don't get to say "well, I'm not God so I don't have to do anything. I can just sit around and let God do all the work." That is not what it means to not be God. That's not even what it means to have faith in God.

In Christ, God frees me from having to try be

God. I no longer need to turn in on myself and focus all my attention on me being the center-of-the-universe superheroine who has come to save the world. Jesus has already taken care of that.

Now I can be the free me God creates me to be: a person created in the image of the God of love and new life, intertwined in God's abundant creation with the diversity of all human beings also created in the image of God. I get to be the baptized follower of

Christ who is called to participate in God's mission of love and justice and hope for the world. I get to be free from my need to be God over others so that I can follow the Spirit's life-giving guidance in the work in which God invites and encourages me to participate.

Also, it is here, in this space of not being God, of not even having to try be God, that I get to most fully live out my freedom to follow Christ and love others. How? Well, in human beings, there is this space between something that happens to or around us and our response to that something. For example, imagine someone says something mean to you. Now, before you respond to that something, there is a moment of freedom when you have the choice to choose what you are going to say or do next. Nobody else gets to make that choice for you; only you.



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You can choose to react instantly without thinking or without recognizing the possible consequences of your words or actions. Or you can choose to sit in that moment of pure freedom and remember, “I am not God.” You can choose to stop in that moment and ask yourself “how God is calling me to respond to this moment?” You can take that moment and choose to let the Spirit be your guide into following Christ in love and compassion.

That moment of choice between event and response, that is where the fullness of freedom in Christ lives. For Jesus claimed that moment for himself and ultimately for us, when he prayed to God in the Garden of Gethsemane, “My Father, if possible, take this cup from me. Yet not my will but your will be done.” (Mt 26:39) In Christ, that moment of choice for God is God’s moment and it is in God that our true freedom stands.

“I am not God, thank God! You are not God, thank God! God is God, thank God!” Owning that truth deep in our souls and letting it burst forth every time we face a choice, any choice – that is true freedom. A freedom not found in any bill of rights but finally in the first commandment as God reminds us again and again: “I am the Lord *your* God. You shall have no other gods before me, including yourself.” (Exodus 20:2)

In the end, the first commandment is not really a command at all; it’s a promise and it’s a gift of a true freedom that comes only in God. So let’s let God be God and live in the truth of not being God, giving thanks always for the freedom that comes in Christ!

Bishop Laurie



Payton Sexe recently graduated from Carroll College with a degree in History, Political Science, and Social Studies for secondary education. After graduation he searched for a job to pursue his dream of teaching and coaching. Recently, he took a job as Social Studies teacher for grades 6-12 at Geraldine Public Schools. He is excited to start this new phase of his life and start his career as an educator!

Congratulations Payton! We know you are going to be a wonderful teacher and Geraldine is so very lucky to have you.



Bethel Lutheran Church

Church Council Reopening Guidelines

*We will still be offering a live stream of the service
for those who wish to worship from home.*

Guidelines:

- Front doors will be propped open and the only entrance into the Church. The west side entrance through the TLC Daycare will remain locked.
- Masks will be **required** and we have some available.
- A table is at the front doors with hand sanitizer, masks, tissues and an offering plate. Ushers will be there to assist with masks and help people find seats.
- Physical distancing of 4 feet will be observed.
- Windows and doors will be opened to increase air circulation.
- Signs on the restroom doors should be used to indicate if you are in the bathroom in an effort to keep the 6 feet physical distance.
- The kitchen, Fellowship Hall and back office hall doors will be closed.
- Hospitality area will be closed.
- We will pass the peace in a no-contact fashion.
- Sanctuary will be cleaned with disinfect cleaner after each Sunday worship service

Please consider the following before you return to worship:

- Have you traveled outside the U.S. in the past 30 days?
- Have you been in close contact with anyone who has traveled outside the U.S. in the past 30 days?
- Have you been in close contact with anyone with flu-like symptoms in the past 30 days?
- Have you had any of these symptoms:
 - Fever over 100.4
 - Persistent cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sudden loss of taste or smell

If you answered YES to any of these questions, please do not enter and contact your health care provider.

Calendar Of Events

Thursday 7/9

- Executive Council conference call 5:30 pm

Tuesday 7/14

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am (Men's Breakfast on hold until September)
- Council meeting at Bethel 6:30 pm

Friday 7/17

- Bethel Office Closed

Upcoming Events

Sunday 7/19

- Interim Pastor Trina Johnsten's first Sunday preaching. Meet and greet to follow on the Bethel Patio.

Tuesday 7/21

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am (Men's Breakfast on hold until September)
- Council meeting at Bethel 6:30 pm

Friday 7/24

- Bethel Office Closed

Electric
City



On - Line!

What a great way to connect with one another! Join the Electric City Bible Study on a Zoom conference Tuesday mornings at 7:00 am. If you are interested in joining email Laurie Turner at lolli51gus@icloud.com and give her an email or cell number and she will send you a link to the meeting.