

# the Bethel Beacon

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July 2017

## July Birthdays!

- 7 Mari Knight
- 7 Tammy Gover
- 8 Jim Van Dyke
- 9 Stephanie Burdick
- 19 Mary Falls
- 20 Christopher Siems
- 21 Meredith Redfern
- 23 Melissa Holland
- 25 Carrie Keys
- 30 Rebecca Griffin
- 31 Scott Burris



## Events in July:

Sat. 8	Soul Collage 9-12
Sunday 9	Community Breakfast 9am Worship 10am
Sat. 15	Neighborhood Hygiene Program 9-12
Sunday 16	Community Breakfast 9am Worship 10am
Tue. 18	Council 7pm
Sunday 23	Community Breakfast 9am Worship 10am
Sat. 29	Neighborhood Hygiene Program 9-12
Sunday 30	Community Breakfast 9am Worship 10am



*The Bethel Beacon* is published by Bethel Lutheran Church. You can find our members and friends scattered throughout North Portland, the metro area, and beyond. As a community, we worship God together, proclaim the Good News of grace, and show hospitality to all people.  
Join us as we live out Christ's command to love each other.

# Notes from the Pasture:

## Where is God in the Midst of Disappointment and Disaster?

Where is God in the midst of disappointment and disaster? This is one of those questions of all the ages. When deep disappointment hits, many a human being has called out to the gods asking why. They might bargain with the powers that be, or make deals, “*God, if you will do this for me, then I will do that for you.*” Many have cursed the gods for letting this happen, or lost faith all together. Many have questioned the gods’ motives or just written them off, truly believing that no gods exist and we are all on our own.

It is hard to find how God is present in the midst of big disappointments and those times in our lives when things really just fall apart. The Bible gives stories not just of the success and great faith, but also challenges, disasters, and events which frighten, concern, and traumatize. Old Testament traditions and stories lay out examples of what people do when faced with these events. Stories like Adam and Eve forced from the Garden, the Flood which destroys almost all humanity, Slavery in Egypt which lasted 400 years, the Exile of leaders to Babylon and the destruction of the Temple, all tell of disaster, yet God is found in the aftermath. There are many traditions around the disappointment of not being able to have children—e.g. Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elizabeth—where if you are faithful, patient and pray hard enough then God will lift your barrenness from you (I will leave alone for now that it could never be the man’s fault).

We have to ask ourselves what about all those women who were faithful, patient and prayed a lot that never had children. Or the folks who really weren’t that bad that died in floods, wars, childbirth, or natural disasters. The problem of two people with cancer and one survives and another dies...did God like one more than the other?

The answers we get from the most of the familiar bible stories do not necessarily gives us answers to real life situations. We have to turn to others often not found in Children’s Bibles. These truths are found in Psalm 22, the prophets (e.g. Amos, Jeremiah) and Job. It is found in Jesus’ dialogue with the disciples when real live people are suffering.

People try simplistic quotes: *God never gives us more than we can handle! God needed another angel in the heavenly choir. They must have done something real bad to deserve this? This is just a test to see if you are a true believer. This is all part of God’s plan and we cannot question it.*

Sometimes real life is beyond anyone’s understanding. Sometimes it is beyond any explanation. Sometimes simplistic theology does not win the day. Jesus gets this. He wept at the death of Lazarus, even though he calls himself the Resurrection and the Life. He is moved in the pit of his stomach seeing the hungry, lost people, even though he names himself the Bread of Life. He reaches out to touch and heal many but recognizes that he needs more help. He forgives from the cross people that are not seeking forgiveness.

So what can we do in such situations? Often all we can do in the midst of disappointment is offer comfort and care. In the midst of disaster, we just need to step up and act for the other. Often theology or pious words are not helpful, where presence or a gentle hand on a shoulder is what is needed. Maybe there is no explanation or anything to be understood. Maybe all we can do is be Christ for them. Not the Christ of glory, but only the Christ of the Cross.

*Pastor Mike*



Dear Friends, for me, summer has always been a time to take a moment or two to sit and breathe deeply, enjoy the sunshine, the warm breeze, the fresh air. Often a novel will be in my lap, open to a page that may or may not be read, while I look at the hummingbirds that have found the feeder and are now jostling for a dominant position for the sweet nectar.

My office here at Bethel has plenty of windows with a beautiful view of the green trees and the blue skies, sometimes punctuated with fluffy white clouds. During the summer day camp, the days are punctuated by the sounds of child play and laughter. In a short while, a group of first, second and third graders will be here to drop eggs from my office window. Some will discover they have protected their eggs well enough to survive the three story drop, others not so much. Their giggles of delight will be shared!

Summer is also a time for me to step away, sometimes even in large chunks of time, to contemplate the beauty around me and to sit in silence and to pray with the Holy One. This is the time of year when I am reminded that the word "Listen" contains the very same letters as the word "Silent."

Even for me, the 'uber'-extrovert, it is not hard to become silent and contemplative, for there is so much that is beautiful in creation and I am so very aware of the infinite nature of the Holy. Father Richard Rohr says it is good for us to withdraw for a time from business as usual to allow time to be contemplative and to just be with The Holy One. He says we have to allow time for "meditation, for going into what Jesus calls "our private room." But at the same time, we cannot escape the world. He says, "we have to remain quite close to the world, loving it, feeling its pain and its joy as our pain and our joy."

So, as we jump whole heartedly into the summer season, I pray for each of you a time of quiet contemplation for silence and listening and a time for action in love.

Plus, some of the best memories in life are made while wearing flip-flops!

Pastor C.



## ***Oregon Synod Visitation and Year of Reformation and Renewal A Note from the Oregon Synod***

Martin Luther was 33 years old when he hammered his 95 Theses to the cathedral door in Wittenberg. So began the Reformation. The date was October 31, 1517 and this year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of that beginning.

Yet, the Reformation was not a single act. It was a movement. In the years to follow the Lutheran movement would be tested and questioned, persecuted and refined. It was 1527, a decade later, when a grand visitation was undertaken – the Saxon Visitation. Luther, Philip Melancthon and other leaders knew it was important to get out to where the people were. They wanted to hear people's stories, assess the faithfulness of their teaching, and stitch the growing Lutheran Movement together.

We in the Oregon Synod are likewise beginning a grand visitation. It is time and the leaders of Bethel are looking forward to our full participation in this coming year of discovery!

Our Oregon Synod Visitation is part of a coming year of "*Reformation and Renewal*." We undertake this journey at the suggestion of our Oregon Synod Mission Table, staff and Synod Council. Our goal is to do this all together and include as many of our ministries as possible. Here's the plan!

- 1) This summer congregations will be encourage to engage in a ministry assessment. We have two tools for this and will support the effort with personal guidance.
- 2) Over the summer we will also be training "visitors" for the Visitation. Deans, Synod Council members, those engaged in our Transformational Leadership Initiative, and more, will all be involved in this work. Perhaps you feel a call to be trained and participate. If so, please let us know!
- 3) This fall, September-November, teams will be visiting congregations. We look forward to talking and listening together!

We're excited to engage this work. We hope you will, too. My God bless our efforts! And in the words of Martin Luther preparing for his own grand visitation in 1527, this prayer:

*May God, the Father of all mercy, grant us through Jesus Christ, his dear Son,  
the spirit of unity  
and the power to do his will. Even though the finest spirit of unity prevails among us  
we still have our hands full to do good and be established by the power of God.*

*What would happen if there were disunity and disagreement among us?  
The devil has become neither pious nor devout this year, nor will he ever be so.  
So, let us be on guard and anxious to keep (as Paul teaches) the spiritual unity  
in the bond of love and peace (Eph. 4:3). Amen"*

# *The Summer Day*

A Poem by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?  
 Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
 Who made the grasshopper?  
 The grasshopper; I mean—  
 the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
 the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
 who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—  
 who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
 Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
 Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
 I don't know exactly what prayer is.  
 I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
 into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
 how to be idle and be blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
 which is what I have been doing all day.  
 Tell me, what else should I have done?  
 Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
 Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
 with your one wild and precious life?

Ongoing prayers for healing for the following:



Paul Beezhold	Mary Rix	Loretta Van Dyke
Dorothy Hansen	Patricia Conner	Christine Downing
David Lingnau	Bob and Nancy Leon	Kathy Buss
Phyllicia McGowan	Steve Garrick	Skye

<u>Prayer Requested for:</u>	<u>Prayer Concern:</u>	<u>Prayer Contact:</u>
Bertha Anderson	Prayers for healing	Karen Anderson
All those beloved children of God who live on the margins	We continue to practice welcome and hospitality to all	Bethel Staff
Wayne Hassebroek	Recovery from surgery, doing therapy	Pr. Christine
Betty and Rennie Ferguson	Peace and comfort	Meghan Cyr
Diego	Healing, health, and peace	PJ Bentley
Norma Moody	Healing, health, and peace	Robin Moody
For all victims of hate speech and prejudice	Peace and healing	Bethel Staff
Ronda Bard	Prayers for peace and comfort for Ronda and her family as she prepares for surgery on July 6th	Pr. Christine



## First Class Mail

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