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Gethsemane Lutheran Church

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*Our Shared Mission: We are saved by grace
 through faith to share the good news of the
 Gospel with all people and live
 God's love by our words and actions.*



Monthly Newsletter – July 2021



Indoor Worship Continues

Masks Optional/Available

10:30am each Sunday
(until September 12, 2021)

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Church Council Minutes

The Church Council of Gethsemane Lutheran Church

Wendy Hanson | Wendy Christophersen | Sandy Gill | Deb Kruhmin | Judi Freis
Carol Klein | Mary Jo Mahaffy | Janet Mullard | Ruth Thoune

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS from Thursday, June 17, 2021

- ** Mary Palmer, a member of the Mid-County Rescue Squad, presented the Council with information and costs for a portable defibrillator (**AED**) to be onsite at the church. Council voted to **purchase**, with funds from the Memorial Fund, at a cost of \$1879.00.
- ** Council voted to **postpone** the Baked Potato and the Sauerkraut Dinners for one more year.
- ** A committee has been set up to **prepare** a formal pastoral performance review procedure, after which, a committee will be selected to perform the actual review. This will be an annual practice going forward.
- ** The case from the older outdoor church sign has deteriorated beyond repair and will be **replaced** with a new sign depicting the ELCA logo.
- ** Council will take a summer recess and meet again in **September**.





1 Brianna Martin, Daniel Thoune
 13 Cheryl Martin
 18 Mark Koldos, Matt Koldos
 22 Jim Gill
 26 Rosemary Kautzer



July 8th

David and Mary Jo Mahaffy



Jay Chapple, Trish Dams

Thomas Dutkavich

Jared Jurmu, Brent Jurmu

Julie Tanguay

A Treasured Position

Ruth has kindly agreed to work **side-by-side** with our NEXT Treasurer, ensuring a smooth transition. Ruth is the best person to ask about the ins and outs of this job, and can be reached at: RThoune2000@hotmail.com

NO previous Treasury experience is necessary – and we will walk **with you** through it all! Please **prayerfully** consider filling this much-needed position in **ministry**.



Ruth Thoune
Treasurer



Ruth Thoune
Treasurer



**Your Name Here
Our Next Treasurer!**

*After years (and years and years) of dedicated work as our Church Treasurer, Ruth Thoune is **retiring** from the position in early 2022.*

We continue to hold in prayer:

Art Kaliszewski
 Dan Etelamaki
 Delores Erickson
 Emily Christenson
 Jim Gill
 Kevin Havelka
 Lorrie Stone
 Mike Lubore
 Robert Berszenyi
 Shirley Wangerin
 Tom Wenger
 Wendy Gravelle

Bethany Gearhart
 David Kohrt
 Denise Marineau
 Evelyn Gewerth
 Jim Wenger
 Lewis Nicholson
 Luann Q. Kiefer
 Mike McCarthy
 Sandy Baumler
 Stephanie Wallgren
 Tom Wenger
 Wendy Hanson

Brian Raether
 Deanna Thill
 Dorothy Klein-Wassink
 Gene Wangerin
 Karen Raether
 Logan Parrett
 Macy Berszenyi
 Penny Nehls
 Sarah Hess
 Sue Skowronski
 Tracy Klatt

Caitlin Christophersen
 Dennis Paul
 Dorothy Peretto
 James Dutkavich
 Keith Thoune
 Lois Azelton
 Michelle Beauchard
 Rob Boe
 Sheila Konkell
 Tammy Parrett
 Wayne Sundstrom

*Thank you for holding the friends and families of our Congregants in your daily prayers.
 Corrections? Additions? Please contact the Church Office. Thanks!*

Pastoral Musings from Pr. Brenda

Dear, dear Church:

This past **Memorial Day**, I was asked to share a brief message at both Bethesda and Stephenson Cemeteries. As a member of a military family, I was honored by the chance to remember the fallen, and pray over such hallowed ground.

No sooner had I concluded those public services, than the **question** was raised: *why are the **flags** no longer displayed in the Sanctuaries of our churches?*

Never one to shy away from a chance to converse and/or teach, I wanted to share with you the respectful reasoning and theological undergirding that contributed to such a position. **First**, I share with you my commentary from those Memorial Day Services, and **then**, a bit about the theological understanding regarding our sacred, worship space.

2021 MEMORIAL DAY HOMILY Bethesda and Stephenson Cemeteries

Good morning. I am the Rev. Brenda Greenwald, pastor of both Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Wallace and St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, here in Stephenson. As I so often do when presiding at funerals, I want to THANK YOU for coming today, because a community that **grieves** together, **heals** together. The same can be said for this Memorial Day 2021: a community that **REMEMBERS** together, **heals** together, and so I **thank you** for your presence here today.

I'm sure it's not lost on ANY of us what a joy it is to truly be **TOGETHER** today: after MONTHS of seclusion, after MONTHS of isolation, this coming together to remember is important for our spirits, for our souls.

I stand before you today as part of a military family myself. I'm the **proud, big sister** of one Bradley John Greenwald who served as a Corporal in the United States Marine Corps - **OOH-RAH!** and a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army. **HOO-AH!** To me? He's just Brad: that little brother who went from **PLAYING** with toy soldiers to **SERVING** his God and country **AS** one.

While I am MOST thankful to be able to still **VISIT** and **THANK** my veteran, we gather here in this cemetery today, as we remember the "Brads" in YOUR life: your brothers and sisters in arms: those who are no longer with us in **BODY**, but always present in **SPIRIT**.

In the **Lutheran** tradition, we celebrate the reality of living in a **BOTH / AND** world: We know we're **BOTH** saints...AND sinners. We follow **BOTH** the law **AND** the Gospel. It's not an **EITHER / OR** kind of existence, but rather one that invites the tension of reality. Sometimes, we have to live with **BOTH** this **AND** that.

Sending scrawny little 18-year old Brad off to 29 Palms instilled **BOTH** a sense of incredible **PRIDE**...AND an overwhelming feeling of **FEAR**. If **YOU** have had to send-off a loved one to serve in combat, you, too, have lived through the **BOTH / AND** reality of these emotions. Some of us, have watched our soldiers **deploy** not once, not twice, but **NUMEROUS** times. These **multiple** deployments take a toll on **BOTH** our soldiers, **AND** on you, their families. And the price is especially steep when these soldiers, those whom we remember **today**, have paid the ultimate price of **SERVICE**...with their **LIVES**.

A mere 15 days before he was to return home with his Unit, Army Specialist **David Emanuel Hickman**, a twenty-three year old young man, was killed in Baghdad by a roadside bomb that ripped through his armored truck on Nov. 14, 2011. Had that IED exploded but **ONE** tank further **BACK**? I would be laying flowers on Brad's grave.



For **Brad**, EVERY day is Memorial Day, as it is for so many of **YOU** who have **SERVED**, either as a **solider** yourself or as the **FAMILY MEMBER** of one who has served. Brad wears the names of **David** and other fallen brothers etched into a now beat-up and scratched, **metal bracelet** around his wrist. For him, it's a tangible way to remember the fallen: it gives him the **PURPOSE** and **DRIVE** he wants to hang on to, as he continues to serve his God, his family, his country.

It helps him remember that those brave souls have **BOTH** died **AND** will not be forgotten. It reminds him, as it reminds **US** that **death** does NOT have the final word, and the hallowed ground upon which our soldiers lie, does indeed give them the **HOLY** rest they so dearly deserve, as they now reside **safely** in the arms of their Creator.

I invite you to grab your **OWN** wrist for a moment: as **WE** remember those gone before:

Let us pray: *God of LIFE, You have seen generations who have died through sacrifice, war, courage and folly. You have comforted generations who mourned and grieved, sang solemn songs, and laid flowers on graves. Gather us in your embrace and cradle us with your **compassion**. As we remember those who have died in past wars and conflicts, help us to remember that **YOU** were there when the mountains were formed. You were there to soothe our grief and breathe hope into the hopeless, and You are with us still. We give you thanks for **LIFE** in Jesus and pray that our lives may be reflections of **GOD'S** love, **Amen**.*

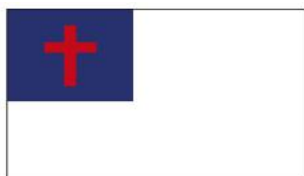
I share my remarks from **Memorial Day** so that you know where I am coming from: I am **BOTH** a member of a deeply-patriotic family, who viscerally understands the sacrifices of those in our military **AND** I am a called and ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA, and I have taken vows to serve with active, courageous faith, to offer the hope of the sacraments, and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in various ministry settings. The absence of flags in our Sanctuaries **is not** a new practice, as I've noticed that the flags had been displayed throughout the years in the Fellowship Hall or Narthex, as noted in archival photos. Perhaps, though, we just need to chat about **WHY**. I share with you my findings:

A LITTLE BIT OF BACKGROUND

The **American Flag** was often placed in the Sanctuaries of churches where the members were **immigrants** from other countries. For example, German Americans who worshipped in German-speaking congregations wanted to declare their allegiance to their **new** country, especially following the second World War. The flag was an easy way to show those who entered the worship space that, while the language spoken during worship might differ from the familiar English, they were on American soil and would support American ways. It was a way to show unwavering **loyalty** to their new country. Same goes for Swedish American, Finnish Americans, Norwegian Americans, etc.



The often called **"Christian Flag"** was another flag once displayed in Sanctuaries. Truth be told, there **IS no** official, Christian Flag - the one we remember from our youth was simply a flag associated with the International Sunday School movement in the '50s. It is not identified with any particular church body, Lutheran or otherwise.



WHAT WE BELIEVE

SYMBOLS

We have a vast array of powerful, visual **symbols** that carry deep meaning inside our worship space: the bread and wine of Holy Communion (being fed at Christ's Table), the waters of the Baptismal Font (reminding us of our baptism into Christ), the Word of God inside our Bible (guiding and forming us), and most importantly: the CHURCH itself, that is, the gathered, people of Christ (those who embody the mission and body of Christ). I spent lots of time reading *"Principles for Worship,"* a guide to the practices of word and sacraments, in addition to principles and supporting materials addressing language, music, preaching, and the worship space. **THESE** symbols, and not a flag of any nation, draw us to Christ and enrich our worship as a community and as individuals.



CROSS of CHRIST

I also engaged in rich conversation with Chaplain Lieutenant David Murphy of the Navy Reserve (Green Bay), our Conference President, and current pastor of Good Shepherd in Peshtigo, WI regarding the topic of flags in the worship space. Being a member of the military, he's guided many congregations through this conversation and was quick to point out a few things: *"We worship CHRIST alone - we*

do not worship a flag. Those serving in the military did not take an oath to the FLAG, nor the president. Rather, they took an oath to support and defend the Constitution. We have the freedom to practice said religion because of being in this country, but we do not worship the flag, American or otherwise. Honoring the flag is a personal choice on one's PERSONAL property, not inside the worship space. NO other images are to compete with the Cross of Christ or the symbols of Christian worship."

**MARTIN LUTHER**

Even Martin Luther, in his commentary on the First Commandment as found in *The Book of Concord*, noted that, *"We are to fear, love, and trust God **above all things.**"* Honoring the flag of our country certainly has its place, yet in worship, we are focused on the eternal presence of Christ that extends **beyond** tribe and nation. The Reformation sought to return the church to the tried and true, Christian teachings: the lessons and love of Jesus.



Out of this movement, *The Five Solas* or belief statements emerged (sola/solus/soli means ALONE) and as Lutherans, we believe:

1. Sola Scriptura (**Scripture alone**): The Bible alone is our highest authority.
2. Sola Fide (**faith alone**): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
3. Sola Gratia (**grace alone**): We are saved by the grace of God alone.
4. Solus Christus (**Christ alone**): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
5. Soli Deo Gloria (**to the glory of God alone**): We live for the glory of God alone.

In summary, I pray that it is realized that this was by no means a subject I tackled lightly. Emotions run high on both sides of this issue, and, while I am fully aware that the flag carries poignant meaning for our veterans and their families, I sincerely hope that you can understand why my deepest prayer as your Pastor and Shepherd is **to lead you to Christ from the foot of the cross.**



To God be the glory,
Pr. Brenda



*"The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you."*

YOU! Yes, YOU!

Join Pastor Brenda for a
preparation class on taking
your First Communion.

First Communion Instruction

Saturday, August 7 from 9:30am – 12:00pm
at Gethsemane Lutheran Church

Youth from **both** Gethsemane & St. Stephen's
(ages 5+) are invited to attend!

- **LEARN** all about how Holy Communion came to be
- **PRACTICE** the many ways the Holy Meal is served
- **BAKE** Holy Communion Bread
- **EAT** our freshly baked bread!



THEN, you're invited to partake in
your very **First Communion on Sunday, August 8th**
at 9am (St. Stephen's) or at 10:30am (Gethsemane)

Please RSVP to Pastor@gsslutheran.org by July 20th
so we can prepare materials and send a follow-up e-mail with details.

There is a place for YOU!

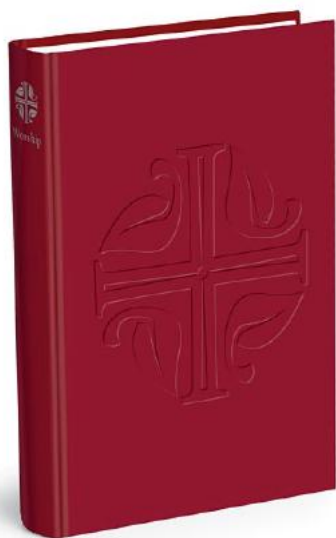


*Wish we could sing “**Hark the Herald Angels Sing**” in July?*

*Really love that one Hymn
Grandma used to sing?*

Well, here’s your chance! During the Summer Months of 2021, Pastor Brenda will be picking **2-3 Hymns** out of a Hat during worship for a mini Sing-along.

Simply place your suggestion(s)
into the **Hymn Hat**,
and a-singing we will go!



Want to put in 1 suggestion? ***Great!***

Have 25 hymn suggestions? ***Great!***

Want to take the hymn book home
to peruse some choices? ***Great!***

JULY 11, 2021

SEVENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST*God's steadfast love and faithfulness.***DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 6:14-29	The death of John the Baptist
Monday	Amos 7:7-15	Vision of setting a plumb line
Tuesday	Ephesians 1:3-14	Thanksgiving for blessings
Wednesday	Psalms 86:1-17	Save me, Lord
Thursday	Deuteronomy 7:7-11	A chosen people
Friday	Leviticus 26:1-13	Rewards for obedience
Saturday	Psalms 85:8-13	God speaks peace to the people
Sunday	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56	Jesus teaches and heals

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK*Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Psalm 85:10 (NRSV)***PRAYERS AND BLESSING****A Prayer for the Week:**

God of glory and might, guide the rulers of the earth toward justice and mercy for the sake of peace in your world through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, may we see in this food a banquet filled with your love that brings justice and peace to all the earth. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May our God and the Lord Jesus Christ bless you with love and faithfulness. (Psalm 85:10)



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In addition to Taking Faith Home, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

JULY 11, 2021

HYMN OF THE WEEK*Goodness Is Stronger
than Evil***WEEKLY MILESTONES**

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- If you had a magic wand, what would you want to do or have happen?
- We like to have power, but power can be misused and be insensitive to others. Give an example of someone misusing their power.
- Jesus brings a power full of love and faithfulness. Where do you see that power in action?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 6:14-29.

This story of the beheading of John the Baptist at a banquet hosted by King Herod presents an image of contrasts. This story comes between last week's Gospel reading about Jesus' disciples traveling without riches or power of their own and staying with others as guests. The Gospel reading two weeks from now is about Jesus' own banquet of feeding hungry souls on a hillside. Jesus treated the people with compassion like a shepherd caring for the sheep. Earthly powers represented by Herod bend toward corruption, greed, violence, and impulsive actions without thought of consequences. Jesus' rule brings people together in peace, feeds the multitudes out of love, and brings healing and an end to demonic powers. We are reminded that earthly powers and governments are not the rule that wins the day in God's universe. We are called to an ordering of life where "love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (Psalm 85:10). How does Jesus' power in your life influence your thoughts and actions?

Pray: **Shepherding God, in a world that seeks to dominate and humiliate others, we thank you for your reign of love and faithfulness that will never let us go through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

In our forms of government, local, regional, and national representatives need to hear from us, especially about issues that relate to our moral resolve. How have you voiced your views on current issues?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Psalm 85 talks about peace. Verse 8 states, "Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts." Make a list or draw a picture of what brings peace to you. Then, read the verse slowly three times. Pause after each reading and wonder what God may be saying to you today. Close by praying the Lord's Prayer.



Northern Great
Lakes Synod
www.nglsynod.org

2021 MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

*This Monthly Newsletter covers information and happenings
for the Congregation of Gethsemane Lutheran Church.*



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

J U L Y



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