

THE MESSENGER



From the Pastor's desk...



Lent means Spring

The word Lent means “Spring”. Lent is certainly a time of repentance, fasting, and prayer. It is a time to look back and confess our sins and our need for a savior. It is also a time to look ahead to our salvation in Jesus’s death and resurrection. Here in northern Minnesota, it is also a time that almost always starts in the dead of winter. This year was no exception with the coldest days of the winter right before Ash Wednesday. At the same time the days are getting longer, and the power of the sun is stronger. We inch toward the promise of Spring during this holy season.

I have never felt so ready to come out from under the blankets of winter and welcome the warmth of Spring. It was just a year ago this March that the Covid-19 pandemic brought a stay-at-home order. We chose to suspend in-person worship until the middle of last summer. In the Fall, the virus became extremely active in our area and we suspended in-person worship again until mid-January. In some ways it feels as if we have been experiencing winter for a whole year.

There seems to be good news ahead. The vaccine roll-out has begun and many of our older members are starting to receive their doses. I am delighted to have received my vaccinations as well. Right now, the infection rates have gone way down in our area. These are all reasons to celebrate! But those of us who have lived here for any length of time know that spring can bring snow, cold, and ice, even into early May. This virus may also fool us into thinking the worst is past, just to rear its head again with new outbreaks of infection. We must remain vigilant, not put the snowblower into storage just yet, and continue to follow the guidelines of healthcare workers when we gather, wearing masks and maintaining physical distance.

This Lent, as we look forward to Easter, we can see the promise of Spring and new life. We mourn the deaths of over one half million Americans and two and a half million people worldwide. We entrust their lives to God who shows us the way to life everlasting through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Council Highlights



Bygland Council – January 13, 2021

Nine members were present.

Barb Erickson, a Mission Interpreter for the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, joined by Zoom. She asked what makes Bygland special. We highlighted our congregations life including the community picnic and Lutefisk dinner. She shared about how the Synod is funded and thanked us for our support of the ministry of the Synod.

Pastor Karen led devotions.

Reports were received from the secretary, treasurer, and pastor.

Old business included building maintenance and repair, parish office copy machine needs, and updates to our Covid 19 Preparedness Plan.

New business included discussing the nominations for 2021; discussing the need for insurance amid political unrest; passing a proposed budget for 2021; and passing a resolution to allow electronic meetings.

The meeting was adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Fisher Council – January 20, 2021

Nine members were present along with Nancy McDonald standing in for the treasurer.

Pastor Karen led devotions.

Reports were received from the secretary, treasurer, financial secretary, and pastor.

Pastor Karen shared correspondence.

A Committee report was received from the parsonage committee.

Old Business included the following: a resolution was passed addressing gift in kind to the congregation; the parish office copy needs were discussed; the annual meeting will be January 31, 2021; the constitution was reviewed to present to the congregation at the annual meeting.

New Business included: the resignation of council member Andrea Marschall; a resolution was passed to allow electronic meetings; the Covid 19 Preparedness plan was reviewed and a resolution to adopt was passed; and a discussion was held about where offerings to the ELCA go.

The meeting was adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Our first parish first communion class for 5th and 6th graders and their parents was postponed until Sunday, March 7; 1:30-3:30 at Bygland Lutheran.

Please plan to attend both sessions unless your 6th grader was able to attend the first session last year.

Our second class meets Sunday, March 21, 1:30-3:30 at Fisher Lutheran.

If you would like to participate in Zoom, you will need to have the student book at home. Please contact Pastor Karen at pastor@fisherbygland.org to participate in the Zoom session.



When Kamini Dhurvey was just a child, her mother died and her father remarried. Her stepmother abused her, and her father did not step in to protect her from his new wife. Unprotected and unsafe, Kamini left home when she was older and eventually found a place to rent and a job in a small shop. But even out on her own, she did not feel safe. Kamini feared that the landlord who owned her residence would hurt her. Through a door-to-door survey, Kamini learned about Naari Shakti, a project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh in India that is supported in part by ELCA World Hunger. Naari Shakti works for gender equality through advocacy for women's rights, provides training in tailoring and computer skills, and offers emergency medical support to girls and women in vulnerable

situations. The project also provides housing assistance and psychosocial support to those who need it. With counseling and support from the project, she was able to leave the place she was renting and move into a hostel for girls. The project later arranged for Kamini to stay in a women's rehabilitation center, where she is living and pursuing her studies. Kamini has found a home at the center. The Naari Shakti program provides her a safe place to live, books and additional support for her education. This is just one project of hundreds supported by ELCA World Hunger in 60 countries around the world. With your gifts, people such as Kamini can have the support they need and hope for a better future. WH40Days2021

MAIL: Make your check payable to "ELCA World Hunger" and write "40 Days of Giving" on your check's memo line. Place your gift in your congregation's offering plate or mail it to: ELCA, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. ONLINE: ELCA.org/40Days PHONE: 800-638-3522 Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support innovative solutions that fight hunger and poverty in more than 60 countries around the world, including the United States. Will you help with your gift today? YES! I would like to support ELCA World Hunger (WHG0038) I have enclosed my gift of \$100 I have enclosed my gift of \$250 Other \$_____

Dear partner in ministry,

As a companion in caring for individuals in your congregation and community, you know the dedicated support that caregivers provide day in and day out for their loved ones. You also may be aware of the worry and strain that accompanies caregiving. That's why I am happy to pass along news about a new service from Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) that helps caregivers build peace of mind by working with them to develop a plan for any potential situation when they could no longer care for their loved ones.

LSS' Emergency Care Planning Service works directly with caregivers and their families to thoroughly assess their needs and create a comprehensive plan that meets those needs. Through a generous grant, LSS offers this Emergency Care Planning service **temporarily at no cost**.

Carol Huesman of Detroit Lakes started assisting her husband, Ken, with daily tasks in 2018 as his physical abilities started to decline from Pulmonary Fibrosis, a lung disease he was diagnosed with three years earlier that started to affect his ability to breathe. Last February, Carol, Ken and their two adult sons met with Laura Hawk, regional coordinator with LSS Caregiver and Companion Service, to develop a plan for Ken's care if Carol suddenly became unable to provide care.

Ken passed away in April of 2020, but Carol said having a plan for his care offered peace of mind as they planned for his increasing needs. "It was reassuring that I wouldn't have to go over how to care for Ken with everyone in our circle," Carol said. "Laura made a document with all of the information they'd need that we kept right on our fridge."

Creating these plans can also help older adults stay in their home during a temporary emergency, such as their caregiver staying in the hospital. "It's planning for an emergency, but ultimately, creating a roadmap for when your loved one transitions into a new phase of their life when they need more care," Laura said. "Planning empowers the caregiver and entire family with information and choices that include ways to keep loved ones at home."

Through Emergency Planning Service, LSS works with caregivers and their families to answer questions such as: Who would care for my loved one if something happened to me? What tasks would that care involve? What resources are available in my community to support my family in providing care?

"Help is out there, but as a caregiver, you have to be willing to reach out and ask for it," Carol said. "I know that it helped my husband a lot. He didn't feel like we were on our own. We had just a great amount of support and caring people."

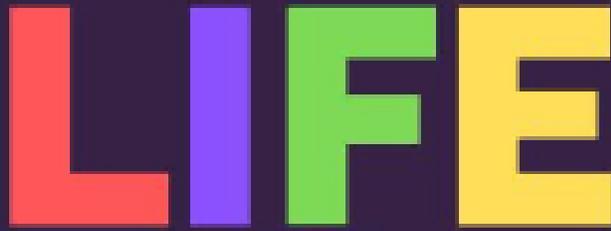
Again, this Emergency Care Planning service is **temporarily available at no cost**. Caregivers can get connected by calling **1.800.488.4146** or visit the [Emergency Care Planning service webpage](#).

Thank you for all the ways you extend the love of Christ to all our neighbors.

In Christ,



The Rev. Julie Wright
Director of Church Partnerships and Volunteerism



Living In Faith Everyday



Saturday, March 6th

9am-12pm

"Why So Many Lutheran
Denominations in the US?"
with Pr Paul Baglyos

Living In Faith Everyday (formerly Lay School) "Why So Many Lutheran Denominations in the US?" with Pr Paul Baglyos Most Lutheran church members have some awareness of the existence of at least two different Lutheran church bodies in the United States: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Besides those two, however, there are literally dozens of other separately organized Lutheran denominational bodies incorporated in the United States, many of them quite tiny and largely unknown beyond their own members. How and why has the multiplication of Lutheran denominational bodies occurred, and what should Lutherans in any one of those bodies know about the others?

<http://www.eandsynod.org/events/2021/03/06/life-event>.

This event will be online only.

Where does my offering go? ELCA budget information

The budget for the ELCA for the years 2020-2022 can be found online. Go to elca.org/resources/Churchwide-Assembly. Under the 2019 tab, click on Section 5: Recommendations of the Church Council. You will need to download this document. Open the download, there will be 12 PDF documents. Open section 05.i Recommendation Budget. The document is entitled "Recommendation: 2020-2022 Budget Proposal." It is 28 pages long. This budget proposal was passed. That can be found in the minutes of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly on pages 192-193. The minutes are 876 pages long. The audit reports for fiscal years 2017-2019 can be found at elca.org/resources/Churchwide-Assembly. Under the 2019 tab click on Section 2: Reports of the Officers. You will need to download this document. Open the download, there will be seven documents. Open 02d Report of the Treasurer, 02d1, 02d2, and 02d3 for the audits for the three fiscal years. The report of the treasurer is 5 pages long, the 2017 audit is 35 pages long, the 2018 audit is 39 pages long, and the 2019 audit is 26 pages long. Printed copies of these documents are available to read in the parish office. Please contact Jami Olson or Pastor Karen at the office, 218-891-4632, to arrange a time to view them. We can also email the PDF documents to you, contact office@fisherbygland.org.

WHAT:

MNsure Counseling

WHERE:

**Northern Dental Access Center
132 3rd St. W
Halstad, MN**

WHEN:

January 6 & 20

February 3 & 17

March 3 & 17

April 7 & 21

10 am - 3 pm

See You There!

This event is free and open to the public. On-site MNsure counseling – apply for Medical Assistance, Minnesota Care or Qualified Health Plan with possible tax credits. To schedule an appointment, call Nancy at 800-820-7263.

