

THE MESSENGER



From the Pastor's desk...

Wholeness in 2023



As many of you know I have been faced with health challenges these past months. Kirby and I have been strengthened through your prayers and encouragement. We thank you. The good news is I now have a diagnosis, while the not so good news is that I have been diagnosed with Lyme disease. In an effort to heal and be restored to wholeness, I have been delving deeply into studying God's Word. The following Psalm reminds us that obedience to God's Word produces wholeness; it seems only logical that we should do all we can to follow it.

Faithfulness to God's Word is my mantra for 2023, and I invite you to join me on a journey to 'wholeness'. Studying God's Word is a significant part of seeking God's Will for our lives. In the Bible, God has provided clear guidelines for how he expects us to live. He has also promised that he will help us to carry out his will if we ask him. Studying and applying God's Word is a discipline that has the capacity

to implant God's truth firmly in our minds and hearts. Let's do this, as a community of faith, a day at a time!

Psalm 119:9-16

9 How can young people keep their way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

10 With my whole heart I seek you;

do not let me stray from your commandments.

11 I treasure your word in my heart,

so that I may not sin against you.

12 Blessed are you, O Lord;

teach me your statutes.

13 With my lips I declare

all the ordinances of your mouth.

14 *I delight in the way of your decrees
as much as in all riches.*

15 *I will meditate on your precepts,
and fix my eyes on your ways.*

16 *I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.*

Sharing Christ's Service,

Pastor Gretchen

Bygland Annual Meeting: Jan. 29th after Worship

Fisher Annual Meeting: Feb. 5th after Worship

**Please email the office with your reports by
Jan. 18th for BLC & Jan. 25th for FLC.**



BYGLAND NEWS

Bygland Lutheran Church Sunday School NEWS

You are the light of the world.....let your light shine. Matthew 5:14-16



Our Sunday school year has been going great so far here at Bygland Lutheran Church. All of our new and returning students are here with smiling faces and open hearts, ready to be filled with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our Rally Sunday coincided with “God’s Work, Our Hands” Sunday on September 11, 2022. The students received a special blessing of their back packs and devices during the church service from Pastor Gretchen. They were each given a “I am loved by God” back pack tag with the Bible verse “You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26), printed on it as a reminder of God’s daily presence in their lives. Our classroom activities for the day included sharing summer memories; campers telling us s’more about their summer camp experiences; and games that would get them excited about the coming school year. While the students were busy in the classroom, our Bygland families participated in the *Adopt-a-Highway* service project ~ becoming God’s hands, doing God’s work, making things new, right here, right now. We are truly blessed to do the work of God!

Our September and October days were filled with classroom curriculum (the heart of our Lutheran identity) which included our kindergartners learning about our Lutheran Church and Jesus; our first and second graders learning about why we worship; our fourth graders learning about Martin Luther and the Apostles Creed; and our fifth graders learning about exploring our worship services. Our newest student, Bryer Boushee, received his storybook Bible on Sunday, September 25th, 2022. He was challenged (as are all new students) to a one-year Bible reading plan to develop a lifelong love for reading the Bible – and what better way than to make it a wonderful opportunity for families to spend time reading, talking, and bonding. Through this challenge he, along with his family, will build good reading habits and learn to think more deeply about God’s Word. Our daily devotionals during opening exercises included reading notes from Jesus as He’s always up for hearing how the day went, listening to worries, and laughing at silly jokes.

As October arrived, our Sunday school service projects continued to take shape. Each family, along with the congregation, were invited to participate in the following projects: *Operation Christmas Child*, where participants prepare a shoebox filled with items for a child in need of hope; shoeboxes for the *Northlands Rescue Mission*, in which participants prepare a shoebox filled with personal care items to support local adults living in a shelter; and giving a donation of non-perishable food items for the *East Grand Forks Food Shelf*. Our collection of items was shared with the congregation during the worship service on Sunday, November 6th, 2022 for consideration and prayer prior to them being taken to their respective collection centers.

For our final Sunday in October, students were given the chance to celebrate their generous hearts and compassionate hands with a special “Pumpkin Prayer Parable.” This included pumpkin carving and a story about how God’s transforming love can fill each of our hearts with joy and light. In addition we were able to view several Samaritan’s Purse stories to see the impact of our giving first hand.



In November the students shared songs with the congregation about sharing their light with the world and how good it feels to be friends with Jesus. They worked hard learning a song with verses sung in Spanish. To celebrate their accomplishment in this, they opted to share “nacho average treats” with the congregation by handing out Dorito chips to all in attendance. The month was also spent the collecting change for the ELCA World Hunger campaign by filling ELCA Good Gifts piggy banks. The students used the monies collected to purchase goats, pigs, honeybees, and chicks for recipients of the program. The recipients in turn can use these sustainable gifts for much needed income. What a difference one little gift of goats, honeybees, or chicks can make! We are thankful for all of the generous donors who contributed funds to this project. Students then readied themselves for Advent by choosing a Christmas program to practice and by receiving an Advent calendar to share with their families in a count-down to Christmas.

In December, they shared the Christmas message though their program entitled “Hallelujah.” The program was a “shadow play” portraying the nativity ending with the students singing Cloverton’s version of “Hallelujah.” The students and Sunday school staff did an amazing job putting together and performing such a wonderful Christmas message. Jesus is the reason for the season! Hallelujah!



As a Sunday school we are looking forward to the New Year and anticipate all that God has planned for us.

We would like to take the time to thank all of those involved within our congregation who lead and participate in our child and youth programming: our **Board of Education**: Jeff Millar, Becky Egeland, Laura Wurden and Holly Wavra; **Teaching Staff**: Jeff Millar, Becky Egeland, Laura Arnold, Rachel Traub, Danielle Brundin, Laura Wurden, and Holly Wavra; **Youth Group Committee**: Eric & Becky Egeland and Kent & Holly Wavra; **Easter Breakfast Coordinators**: Troy & Patty Pecka; and all of our parents, Pastor Gretchen, and all congregational members, for their continued support.

Happy New Year from the Byglund Sunday School!

Dates to Remember: Sunday school back in session: January 8th, 2023



**Bygland Lutheran Church
Middle and High School Youth Group News**

The youth group kicked off their new school year by participating in Adopt a Highway on Sunday, September 11, 2022. This was a great way to come together and work side-by-side doing something good for our Bygland Community.



This was followed up by a day-trip of hiking & biking at Turtle River State Park on Saturday, September 17, 2022. The students enjoyed the trails, a picnic lunch, and cookie decorating. Thank you to all of the youth group members who attended and to Jeff Millar, Laura Arnold & Holly Wavra for chaperoning the gathering.





Let's read!

Join our literary circle to discuss a variety of books and topics with friends, new and old.

We will meet monthly at the Bygland Lutheran Church or off-site per hostess' request at 7:00 p.m. If you are unable to join in person, consider joining electronically via ZOOM.

Please e-mail Holly Wavra with any questions or to receive a ZOOM link invite (hwavra@yahoo.com).

FISHER NEWS

Fisher Church has been blessed for the past 6 years by the faithful service of Nancy McDonald serving as Bookkeeper/Treasurer. Her commitment serving in this capacity was completed December 31, 2022. With deep gratitude we thank Nancy for her dedication and love for the body of Christ. Well done, good and faithful servant. Beginning January 1st we BOLDLY welcome Carmen Knutson to lead Fisher Church as Bookkeeper/Treasurer. We are grateful for Carmen's willingness to serve in this capacity. Welcome aboard Carmen, to the FLC staff.

2023 READING LIST

January 30, 2023

"Mad Honey"

by Jodi Picoult & J.F. Boylan

February 27, 2023

"The Messy Lives of People" by Phaedra Patrick

March 27, 2023

"The Seven Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle" by Stuart Turton

April 17, 2023

"The Quarry Girls" by Jess Lurrey

May 22, 2023

"Carrie Soto is Back" by Taylor Jenkins Reid

June 26, 2023

"The Last Apothecary" by Sarah Penner

July 24 2023

"The Plum Tree" by Ellen Marie Wiseman

August 21, 2023

"The Girl Who Slept with God" by Val Brelinski

September 25, 2023

"The Exiles" by Christina Baker Kline

October 23 2023

"Next Year in Havana" by Chanel Cleeton

November 27, 2023

"The Henna Artist" by Alka Joshi

December 18, 2023

"Cloud Cuckoo Land" by Anthony Doerr



FISHER LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Guess Who's Coming to Bethlehem?

The Fisher Lutheran Church Sunday School Christmas program, **Guess Who's Coming to Bethlehem?**, was performed on Dec. 11th during the regular church service. In this story, the animals in the Bethlehem stable had been informed of the coming Messiah, but they weren't quite sure who it would be. The lamb naturally thought it would be a lamb; the dove thought it would be a dove who would bring peace... and the other animals had their own thoughts as to who this mysterious visitor would be!



OFFERING

JANUARY 2023 - NOISY OFFERING

The Sunday School children will be collecting a **NOISY OFFERING** on **January 8th** during their Gathering session. Bring in loose change and let it ring as it is gathered in our metal buckets! ***We will also be giving all FLC worshipers a chance to contribute with Sunday School students collecting pocket change during the church service.*** Noisy offering collected January through May will be sent to Pathways Lutheran Outdoor Ministries.

JANUARY 22, 2023 – MISSION SUNDAY

It's Mission Sunday – Jan. 22nd! In lieu of a monetary offering at our opening session, the Sunday School children are encouraged to bring **individual Mac & Cheese cups** to help support the **Backpack Program at Fisher School**. This program provides food to students who don't have enough to eat throughout the weekend.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JANUARY 15, 2023 - BAPTISM RECOGNITION

FLC Sunday School students will rejoice with those celebrating the anniversary of becoming children of God in the sacrament of Baptism during the month of December & January.

December & January Baptism Anniversaries

Katie Getsman
Maclin Goodwin
Camdyn Krostue
Braison Ibarra
Chase Krostue

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! 1 John 3:1

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL FEBRUARY 19, 2023 – PRESIDENT'S DAY BREAK



FISHER LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL

**2022
CHRISTMAS
PROGRAM**



**Guess Who's
Coming to
Bethlehem?**

Who will this mysterious visitor be?





Family Sledding Event

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH
2 - 4 PM**

**BRING YOUR SLED & HOT CHOCOLATE AND JOIN US AT
CENTRAL PARK IN CROOKSTON, MN FOR AN AFTERNOON OF FAMILY FUN!!**

***HOSTED BY FISHER LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 218-891-4632***

FISHER LUTHERAN WELCA BIBLE STUDY

Way before human beings took to social media, Netflix or Judge Judy, there were God's laws. Not for entertainment, but for eternity, these 10 commandments actively promote the health and life of others and ourselves.

From January to April 2023, we will join the Rev. Dr. Christa von Zychlin for a Bible study that examines how the commandments still speak to the challenges of our world today: faith, joy and romance; violence, murders and minding our tongues; the spirituality of sex; integrity in the marketplace; overcoming generational divisions; hectic and overscheduled lives; peace and respect; and more.



January 18, 2023 @ 9:00 AM

Session One

Dancing the Decalogue

Commandments 1 & 2

**Gather
Zoom Bible
Study**

You can also join the Gather Zoom Bible Study session each

4th Monday of the Month

7:00-8:00 PM

Zoom Meeting ID 830 8115 5921



FISHER LUTHERAN QUILTING

Fisher Lutheran Church

January 9 & 10

January 23 & 24

9:00 AM

PARISH NEWS

Greetings and Merry Christmas from the Call Committee,

We have fantastic news to share, Pastor Gretchen has decided to accept the call of Pastor for our 2 point Parish, Fisher/Bygland!! We are on step #8 of a #10 step process. Our next step the congregations are a part of, and that is to voter her in. We will have our individual votes at each annual meeting. We need a quorum to make the vote count, so please plan on attending the Annual meetings. Upon a 2/3rds vote of approval, our final step in the process will be to have the installation of the Pastor, tentatively set for Feb. 26th. This is great news, God is good and we look forward to having Pastor Gretchen and Kirby as a full time part of the Fisher Bygland Family. Have a safe and happy holiday season!!

God Bless, Travis Schwarz



We want to thank everyone who came out to join in the creative fun, it was enjoyed by all! Thank you to Paint and Timbers (Jami Olson) for hosting such a fun party and the opportunity for fellowship. We can't wait to do it again!



BYGLAND LUTHERAN COUNCIL 11-9-22

Old Business

Roof Repairs – Completed and now waiting for work on the steeple. Hopefully this will be completed during the month of November. A check was received from Church Mutual Insurance to cover some of the costs.

Website – Becky Egeland and Holly Phillips have access to the Website, Pastor Gretchen and Jami Olsen are the main people in charge.

Directory – Waiting for proof to be sent.

Work Group Books – The Work Group Books have been updated.

Cemetery Maintenance – Work in progress. Completed until spring. Has been paid for the work that has been completed thus far.

New Business

Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner discussed. We are ready!

Annual Meeting was discussed. Nominating Committee needs to start their calling.

Request to post the Ten Commandments was made by Alan Halvorson. Request was approved and he will follow up on the request.

The next regular council meeting will be December 14, 2022.

FISHER LUTHERAN COUNCIL 11-16-22

Pastor's Report

- Pages have been added to the website for prayer requests (will be forwarded via email to both office and pastor email accounts / a form to become a member of the church / an archive for past newsletters.
- The Holden Evening Service will be used for Lenten services 2023
- Pastor Gretchen will interview with the call committee on Monday, Nov. 21, 2022
- A number of Jr. High students will be attending the Middle School Youth Gathering- Nov. 19, 2022

Committee Report

Property Committee –

- Valley Electric replaced the bulbs in the front of the church
- The back-up heat was tested and is working
- The water sensor under the kitchen sink was reset
- The roofing project will hopefully be completed in the next few days.
- The Clarion system needs to be reset.

Parsonage – A water leak was repaired. In addition, the water supply on the new fridge will be repaired.

Call Committee – The Call Committee is scheduled to interview Pastor Gretchen on Monday, Nov. 21, 2022

Music & Worship – The committee will meet on Dec. 8th @ 6:30 to choose hymns for the first half of the new year.

Old Business

- Roofing - \$130,000 for the roofing project has been received to date.
- Constitution Review Process – Tami Newhouse, Reed Tinkham, Ken Miller & Pastor Gretchen will work on the bylaws of the constitution before it is resubmitted to the synod for approval.

New Business

- Both the MIF #2 & #3 are maturing on 11-21-22. On motion by Jen Reitmeier, second by Ken Miller, the council voted to reinvest MIF #2 at 3.46% for 72 mos.
- The FLC Annual Meeting date was set for Jan. 29 following the 11 AM service. 10
- The parish funds have been set up in Icon.

The next FLC Council meeting will be held on Dec. 21, 2022 @ 7:30 PM