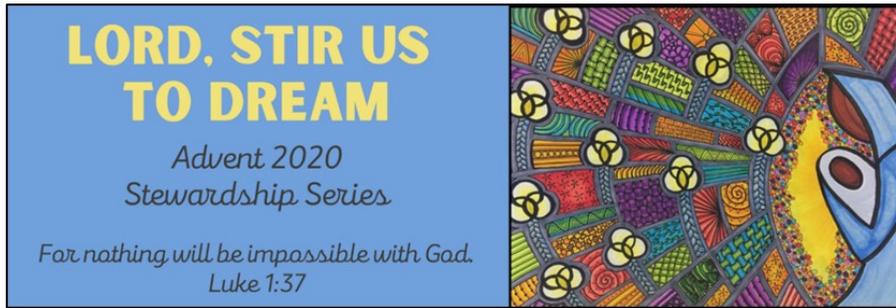


THE MESSENGER



From the Pastor's desk...



“For Nothing is impossible with God.” Luke 1:37

These are comforting and important words for us to hear right now. It is the darkest time of the year. The darkness can be depressing and sometimes scary. Yet, the darkness can also be cozy and comforting. In the darkness of night, we put the worries of the day to rest as we sleep. This is when we dream. Our Northwestern Minnesota Synod’s Advent Stewardship Team has produced this Advent series invites us to dream.

This Stewardship series will invite us to lament and repent before we dream and celebrate. The theme follows the lessons of the Advent season. The sermon for the first Sunday of Advent, November 29, will be delivered by Pastor Larry Strenge. ELCA Coordinator for the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving, adjunct faculty for Lilly School of Philanthropy, and Indiana University, and Trainer for Cultivating Generous Congregations (CGC). Pastor Strenge will use a very special character to invite us to lament, trusting that God hears our pleas.

The second Sunday of Advent, December 6, Pastor Birgitte Catlin will invite us to repent. Pastor Birgitte serves the Baudette Lutheran Parish, where my husband and I served for six years. Pastor Birgitte will share a powerful message from the book of Joel about her own journey into a life of repentance and renewal.

Bishop Bill Tesch will share the sermon for the third Sunday of Advent, December 13. Bishop Tesch is encouraging all congregations in our Synod to share this Stewardship series to enter more deeply into our life of faith as individuals, congregations, and a Synod. The Bishop will share his own experience of dreaming about what was, what is, and what God can do in our midst as we move into an uncertain future.

The theme for the fourth Sunday of Advent is celebrate. I will be giving the sermon that day, focusing on all the reasons we need a Savior and glorifying God for sending us Jesus.

What are you dreaming of this Advent? How is God calling you to lament, repent, dream, and celebrate? I hope ponder these questions in this season of Advent as a way to prepare once again for Jesus to enter into our world anew!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Karen Young Trenne

Christmas Worship – Reservations will be necessary

The Worship and Music Committees of Fisher and Bygland Churches would like to thank everyone who responded to their inquiries about Christmas worship. They have determined that RESERVATIONS WILL BE NECESSARY. Your response to the worship and music committee is not your reservation request.

The Christmas worship plan is:

Christmas Eve

4:00 Bygland

6:00 Bygland

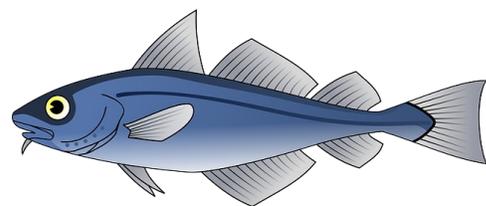
Christmas Day

10:00 Fisher

Please call the parish office at 218-891-4632 or email office@fisherbygland.org with your reservation request. You will receive a confirmation of your request.



Bygland Lutheran Church is sad to announce that our annual Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We hope to see you all next year!



Lord, Stir Us to Dream

Advent is the season of the year when we watch and prepare for the arrival of Christ. Take a journey with us through the biblical readings as we approach the increasing darkness of winter and despair. It is

easy to look around us as the days get shorter and see so many things going wrong in the world. It is also easy sometimes to look around our churches and despair at the loss of what once was a generation ago.

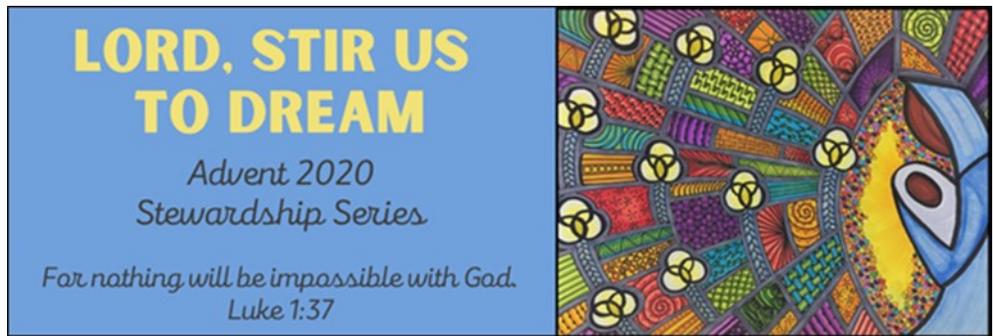
The Bible has many places where the people expressed dismay and a longing for God to come and save them. In Isaiah 64 we read a prayer of appeal to God to tear open the heavens and come down. In Psalm 80:3 we read, "Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved." In 1 Corinthians Paul writes about waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Mark 13:26 Jesus says, "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Even outsiders appeal to God in Daniel 6: The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!"

Advent begins Sunday, November 29. The first part of the journey is naming and lamenting where we are and what we struggle with. We need to acknowledge the darkness that we sit in and may even feel closing in around us. Think about those areas where you struggle and feel the lack of God's presence in your life or the world. Name those things individually and communally in prayer. Put into words those things that weigh you down. Like the people in the Bible we need to cry out our anguish to God. The sermon for this Sunday will be given by Pastor Larry Strenge.

On the Second Sunday of Advent, December 6, we move out of our time of lament into repentance. We read in Isaiah 40 a call to prepare the way of the Lord. This is a call to repentance for our own transgressions. In the time of confession in the liturgy we confess "*We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.*" Each of us has our own areas of shortcoming to acknowledge as we prepare to have an open heart for our Lord. The Lord sends out John to prepare the people for Christ's arrival and the Lord sends us the Spirit as well. The sermon will be given by Pastor Birgitte Catlin.

The Third Sunday of Advent, December 13, is our time to dream and commit to the future God has envisioned for us. Use Isaiah 61 as a scriptural picture of God's vision for the people in your prayer and discernment. Use the coloring exercise as a form of prayer and meditation. Ask God to show you ways your church and you could expand ways to minister to the world. This is a time of dreaming without the editing of what you think would never be possible. Mary had that thought when Gabriel told her she would be pregnant as a virgin. His response to Mary in Luke 1:37 is, "For nothing will be impossible with God." Dare to be open to the impossible. The sermon will be given by Bishop Bill Tesch.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20, is our time to celebrate with Mary as she sings her song of praise in Luke 1:46-55. This is a time we can recognize and affirm that everyone, no matter their station in life, is a precious child of God. It is a time to celebrate and acknowledge that everyone, like Mary, matters and has something to offer. The sermon will be given by Pastor Karen Young Trenne.



Bygland Council highlights

October 14, 2020 nine of the twelve council members were present for the meeting.

Reports were given and approved.

Old business:

- Our constitution was reviewed by the Synod they have a few recommended changes. A small committee will review these and then we will vote on these changes at the annual meeting.
- We discussed the changes to Pastor Karen's Portico coverage. A motion was made by Barry Traub to approve Pastor Karen being covered by the Portico Gold Plus plan for the next year. It was seconded by Alan Halvorson; *motion carried*.

Building maintenance was discussed.

New business:

- We reviewed the compensation guidelines. An officers meeting was set for 10/28/20 @ 7:30pm at Bygland. These guidelines will be discussed and presented at the joint council meeting on Nov. 4th at Bygland.
- Our water meter has been recommended to be replaced. It should cost approximately \$500.
- Logan Egeland has fulfilled his confirmation requirements. A motion to approve the confirmation of Logan Egeland was made by Randy Moe, seconded by Marsha Ketring; *motion carried*. He will be confirmed on October 25th.

We discussed the Lutefisk/Meatball dinner. It was decided that it would be indefinitely postponed. This would have been our 17th year. We will put this out on social media.

Meeting adjourned and we closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Fisher Council Highlights

The Fisher Lutheran Council met October 21, 2020 with all members present.

Reports were given and approved.

Old Business:

- Snow removal on church property: New Image Lawn Care out of Neilsville Mn. Motion was made by Adam M. to accept contract from New Image to take care of snow removal on church property second by Bruce Newhouse.
- Portico Benefit Package: Motion to approve Gold Plus Portico Package was made by Paul R. second by Tami Byklum.

New Business:

- Social Concerns: Tami N. and Cheryl came up with making goodie bags to give to church members to let them know that we are thinking about them and are in hope that in church worship resumes soon. Motion was made to reimburse Tami N. for supplies used for goodie bags from undesignated memorial funds.
- Handicap parking signs: New signs to be made or purchased for parking lot.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.