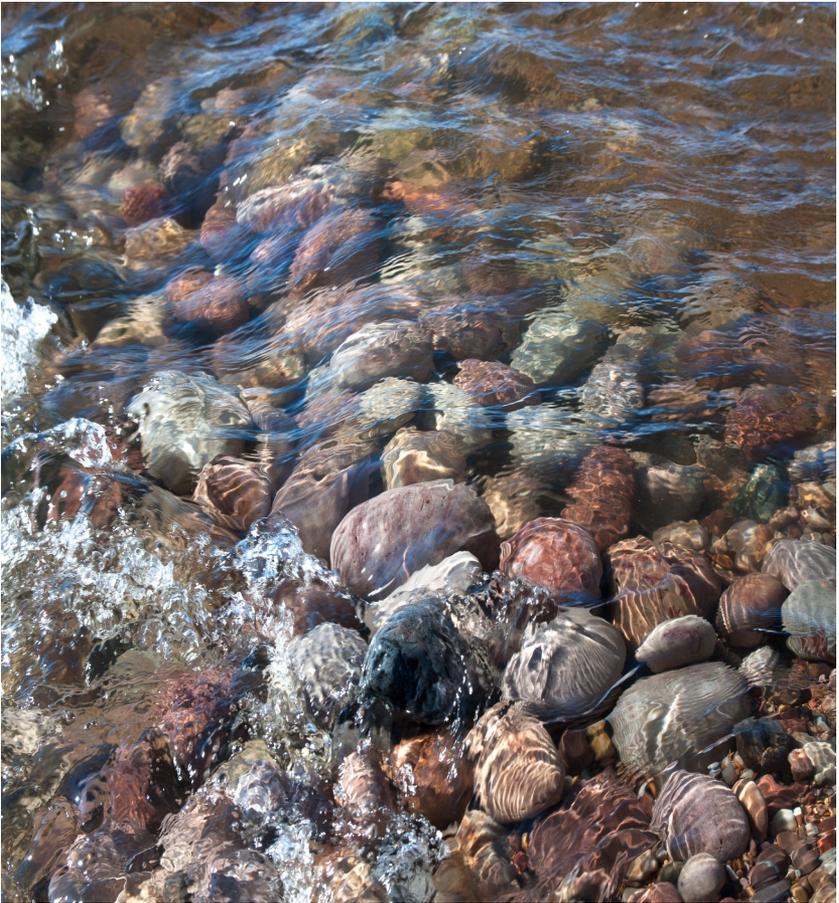


Come to the Water

Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters.

Isaiah 55:1



2017 Lenten Devotions

Written by BLC Parishioners and Friends

LENT AT BLC

Ash Wednesday, March 1st

- | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 11:00am | Worship with Ashes and Communion |
| 11:45am | Lunch |
| 6:15pm | Worship with Ashes and Communion |
| 7:15pm | Pizza served |

Wednesday During Lent, March 8th - April 5th

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 4:45pm | Soup and Pizza Supper, Fellowship Hall
(dinner served until 6:00 pm) |
| 5:30pm | Bridge and Confirmation Classes |
| 6:15pm | Worship Service |
| 6:50pm | Mentors and Confirmation Students
conversation Time |

Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday, April 9th

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 9:00am | Worship with Procession of Palms and
Reading of Passion |
|--------|--|

Holy Week

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 6:15pm | April 13th, Maundy Thursday Worship
Service |
| 12:00pm | April 14th, Good Friday Ecumenical
Service at UCC |
| 6:15pm | April 14th, Good Friday Taize Service |

Easter Day April 16th

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 7:00 am & 9:00am | Worship of the Lord's Resurrection |
|------------------|------------------------------------|

Come to the Water

505 Swiss Lane · Barneveld WI 53507 · 608-924-8621
www.barneveldlutheranchurch.org

Come to the Water

- +Be refreshed
- +Dip a toe in and walk through Lent with us
- +Dive in and go deeper
- +Strengthen your faith practices
- +Remember how generous and gracious God is!

Come to the Water, the life-giving
water of God's love!

I am happy to offer you these reflections gathered for our 1st annual Lenten Devotional! I thank each writer for responding to the call to “*come to the water*” and for opening their hearts to share their faith and experiences.

Special thanks to Diane Schlimgen for her willingness to say yes to helping with this project, from the sign-up board to putting together this finished booklet you now see. I'm also grateful to Marcia Thompson and Amy Hearne for their editing and copying assistance. I thank *you*, dear reader, for joining BLC on this Lenten journey. Writing about one's faith and sharing it is not easy, yet it is our baptismal call as sons and daughters of the Lord to be Christ's light to the world.

Our Lenten environment invites us to “Come to the Water.” As we prepare to say “Yes” to Jesus at Easter and renew our baptismal promises, we are invited to spend time with the image of water. There is a “river of grace” flowing through the sanctuary. Small stones will be available for people to take and write something on - from something holding them back from God's love to lifting someone up to an addiction one is suffering with. People will be invited to leave those stones in the “river” and allow the flow of God's goodness to overwhelm them. Please come to the water and spend time at its awesome banks.

Blessed Lent, Pastor Jim

Your Daily Devotionals - Suggestions for Use

1. Read the day's Bible verse over several times. Reading aloud is also helpful.
2. Read the devotional and pray the prayer.
3. Pray for the writer of the day's devotional, thanking God for opening their lives and for sharing their faith with you.
4. Use your Bible to look up the verse and read the verses surrounding it for the context of the day's verses.
5. Let all that you have read be present with you throughout your day and activities.
6. Read the devotional as a family, at a meal, or with a prayer partner. Children can participate in reading aloud and discussing.
7. Give a copy of this devotional to a friend or relative.
8. Discuss the day's devotional with others, asking these questions:

How is God active in my life?

*How were my actions and interactions today
influenced by my Christian faith?*

What is God calling me to change?

**Devotionals are also available online:
www.barneveldlutheranchurch.org**



Ash
Wednesday
March 1

“But now says the LORD come back to me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Rend your hearts and not your garments, and come back to the LORD your God for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and rich in kindness.”
Joel 2:12-13

“Keep your head above water.” I remember learning to swim and hearing my dad keep repeating that line...*keep your head above water*. It was scary leaving the confines of the side of the pool and then leaving the safety net of his arms as I learned how to swim at the local pool. It’s a rite of passage. At its heart, Lent invites us to find the courage to leave the shore. That means leaving the crutch of our lifelong safety nets, complaints and resentments, or our unhappiness over our upbringing or our bodies or whatever it may be. It means no longer focusing negative energy on things beyond our control. It means looking beyond the safety of the familiar. *Keep your head above water*.

The image of letting go of the shore and finding the middle of the river and letting the river take us is both frightening and exhilarating. And for us making this sacred journey, this is grace. Do you remember letting go and swimming on your own for the first time? *You survived*. Our lives are a combination of what we can control, what we can’t and the results of the choices we make.

This is my first Lent without dad. He’s in the water of new life and he will continue to invite me to let go of the shore and push off into the middle of the river. I can hear him saying now “*Jim, keep your head above water*.” Grace invites us to leave the shore and venture out. Don’t worry- our lifeguard, Jesus Christ, is right there with you to celebrate.

I came across a Hopi Indian poem which perfectly captures this image: “*There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination. The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above water. And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate.*”

Prayer: *God of the water, you invite us to leave the shore behind and venture out. Your river brings us to where we need to be. Allow us the grace to leave our safety nets and come to you. Refresh us and let us be your instruments to cleanse and refresh our world. Amen.*

The Reverend Jim Hearne is Pastor at BLC. He is the husband of Amy and the proud father of Anna and a baby to come in the summer.



Thursday
March 2

“My soul magnifies the LORD, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

Luke 1:46-47

The Contemporary English version of this bible verse states Mary said “with all my heart, I praise the Lord and I am glad because of God my Savior for he has been mindful of his humble servant to be chosen to be the mother of Jesus.”

When we read these two verses we think about how important we all are to the Lord. Also, how important it is for people to be connected to a church.

Church has been part of our family since we were all baptized into the Christian Faith. We are very grateful that our parents took us to church, Sunday School and Confirmation. We were taught the Lord’s prayer, Ten Commandments, Apostles Creed and the 23rd Psalm. All of this has helped to guide our life. We cannot imagine how different our journey in life would have been or our children’s with out Christ in our lives.

***Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank you for always being part of our lives and guiding us in our every day. Let your spirit guide us and help us as we rejoice in God our Savior. Amen.*

Doug and Judy Johnson have been married for 50 years. Doug grew up in Mount Horeb and Judy in Barneveld. Together they have 3 children and seven grandchildren. They farmed in Barneveld from 1974 thru 1985. Doug also worked for the department of transportation for 21 years. Judy worked for the U.W. Medical School Department of Family Medicine for 27 years.



**Friday
March 3**

“To all who received him, he gave power to become children of God.”

John 1:12

When I was 3 years old my great grandma passed away. I have memories of flowers, the casket and my family being really sad. I also remember seeing my family and friends going up to the casket where my grandma laid so beautifully and peacefully. I was curious as to why my grandma wasn't moving or awake. I asked my mom "Why won't Grandma Vi talk to me?" My mother told me "Grandma Vi died." I asked her "what do you mean she died?" My mother snapped at me "she is sleeping!" From that moment on I was scared to go to sleep. I didn't understand why I would never see Grandma Vi again. I didn't have a religious presence in my life, our family didn't attend church. My dad always said "He had enough of God when he was a kid." My mom said going to church wasn't going to change anything...so we didn't go. My whole childhood and teenage years I struggled with the God and the unknown.

Kevin and I were about to get married and we needed to take a marriage class. I confessed to the Pastor that I really didn't know much about the bible, God or church. I was invited to start attending church and in the beginning I was nervous and overwhelmed. I wanted to be a believer and have God in my life.

It took me many years to feel like I was starting to understand, fit in, or really know how to believe in God. I had always wanted to believe, but I never really knew how to become a believer. It is important to me that my kids grow up with a religious presence in their lives so they won't grow up in fear.

I am a child of God, I have become a believer, and I have chosen to educate myself with God. God is with us, loves us and can ease our fears...come to the table and receive Him and believe in Him and you will be a Child of God.

Prayer: *Thank you for letting me come to the table and be fed so I can be a child of God and a believer of God. Invite those that struggle with church to come...come to the table and you will be saved. Amen.*

Michelle Ihm married to Kevin with 4 children. They operate a dairy farm in Barneveld.



Saturday
March 4

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled!”

Matthew 5:6

As soon as I saw this text, I knew this was the devotional day for me to do in remembrance of my mom. The Beatitudes, from which this verse comes, were near and dear to her. During Vacation Bible School one year, they were asked to memorize a passage from the Bible. While most of the class chose Psalm 23, mom chose The Beatitudes. She not only memorized this scripture, she lived it. They are a beautiful prayer of the guidelines Jews in Jesus’ day had for righteous living under the rules of the scribes and Pharisees. These qualities Jesus highlights (being poor in spirit, meek, pure in heart, merciful), contrast sharply with the pride of the Pharisees. We all hunger and thirst for physical things like food, water, money, clothing, etc. While we need the physical to live, God asks us to hunger and thirst for his word. I struggle to read and understand God’s word and how it relates to us today. Whether we read his word every day or hear the word on Sundays, we are quenching this hunger and thirst. The Beatitudes end with “Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven...”

Prayer: *Dear Lord, may we hunger and thirst for your word and have it nourished through prayer, your word and song. Amen.*

Julie Reese To know me, is to know music, singing, knitting and sports (go Badgers, Packers, and Brewers) are my passions and hobbies. I have one little boy---a five year old Shih Tzu puppy named Bucky. I have 2 brothers Jeff (Carrie) their 2 daughters Lauren and Sophie, and John (Deb) their children Noelle, Bennett and Parker. Have you seen that vehicle with the license plate “BELGNS”? Yes, that’s me! This plate is for the Belgian draft horses my family raised as I was growing up.



**First Sunday
Of Lent
March 5**

“God took the man and settled him into the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it. Then God gave the man this command: You are free to eat of all the trees in the garden. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you are not to eat: for, the day you eat of that, you are doomed to die.”

Genesis 2:15-17

In the reading for today, Adam and Eve are shown all that God has provided for them in the Garden. All of their needs are taken care of. God only has one rule, that they cannot eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge. Ultimately, they eat the forbidden fruit and are cast out of the garden to a life of toil where they will have to work hard to survive. More importantly, they will have mortality and will not live forever. They are now destined to die and will return to the ground.

God supplies all we need to survive. We have a defined mortal existence. But God has not forgotten us, we are offered an opportunity for eternal life. But as in the Garden, there is a rule. We must believe in and follow Jesus. Through the water we are baptized and begin our journey to believe and follow. As with Adam, I am a sinner and often do not follow the rule. I take for granted all that God has provided. I take for granted that he sent his only son so that I may have forgiveness and eternal life. At various periods of my life, I have struggled with my faith and strayed from following Jesus as I should. Those times are plagued with feelings of hopelessness and unworthiness. It is easy to believe, much harder to follow. Those feelings are alleviated when I strive to follow and remember Gods promise.

Prayer: *Holy God, Thank you for all that you provide for our physical survival. We take your gifts for granted, not being the good environmental stewards that we should be and forgetting to give thanks for what we have. Thank you for your gift of eternal life that you have given us through the sacrifice of your only Son. Help us to follow the rule of believing, of following, so that we may have eternal life. Amen.*

Lowell Thronson was raised on a dairy farm in Blue Mounds with my parents, Betsy & Glenn, and 4 siblings. We were members of Perry Lutheran church in Daleyville. Tammie and I have been married for 31 years and have 2 sons, Levi and Jacob. I have the privilege of being able to see my family each day as we work together.



Monday
March 6

“God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with your testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”

I Corinthians 10:13

Temptation. What does that mean? According to Wikipedia, temptation is defined as a fundamental desire to engage in short-term urges for enjoyment, that threatens long-term goals. In the context of some religions, temptation is the inclination to sin. Temptation also describes the coaxing or inducing a person into committing such an act, by manipulation or otherwise of curiosity, desire or fear of loss.

Sometimes when I am at the store, I am tempted to buy things I don't need. It will give me instant satisfaction. A short time later, the guilt sets in and I ask myself: “did I really need that right now, was there something more important to spend my money on?” What about that decision I made the other day? It got me what I wanted at the time, but what are the ramifications down the road? Some temptations are simple ones but others challenge us in life like no others.

There is temptation all around us; from the dessert table to the gambling machines and to everything else in everyday life. It is an issue that all of God's children must deal with. It started with Adam and Eve and continues to this day. What the verse tells us is that temptation is common to man and there are no temptations that others before us have not felt. Temptation transcends race, color, and creed, for we are all tempted by the same things, time and time again.

The verse also tells us that he will never tempt us with more than we can handle and there is also a way out. It's a relief to know that God always has our back and will give us a way to escape that temptation. He is always there to help guide us over life's difficulties if we just trust him to do so.

Prayer: *Dear God, As the Lord's Prayer says forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into **temptation** but deliver us from evil. Please continue to bless members of our congregation and community as we continue to spread your good word and deeds. Bless all those who are suffering and in your need the most. Amen.*

Jeremy and Samantha Oyen are Barneveld residents. Jeremy is the Village Police Chief and Samantha works at Agrace Hospice Care. We are the parents of Amelia (4) and Logan (2) who are full of endless energy and keep us on our toes. We are expecting baby # 3 in May and are so glad to be at BLC. It really is a wonderful congregation and community.



Tuesday
March 7

“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?”

Isaiah 55:2a

Thank you God, for walking with me as I prepare to share this Scripture and my ideas of “Coming to the Water.”

As Christians, rich or poor, we are being asked “why spend your money?” Why not come to God’s table and He will provide us bread that will not cost us anything? We as Christians are spending too much time, money and labor on things that are not necessary.

When I invite our friends and family into our home I seem to focus on the wrong things. I spend a lot of hours cleaning and preparing for my family and friends to arrive. We want everything to look perfect, taste perfect and be perfect. Maybe instead of concentrating on everything being perfect we should just be happy to have friendships. We do not have to spend money on friendships or the bread of Christ. Take God’s hand and be satisfied with what we have.

Why do we spend our money for that which is not bread? Jesus sacrificed his body for us. We should in return give to him and spend our time and money on God and with God. Let God into your hearts and souls to satisfy your hunger.

Prayer: *Dear God, Thank you for setting the table and satisfying our hunger with Your bread and body. Amen.*

Alycia Hathaway, married to Josh and mother of 3. Evan (12) Elliot (6) and Emma (2). We live in Barneveld. I have been with BLC since April 2016. I am active with Bell Choir, Holy Moly and on Church Council. In July I will be assisting with VBS.



Wednesday
March 8

“May the Lord, who is good, pardon all those who set their heart on seeking God.”

2 Chronicles 30:18-19

One day when walking into work and passing by Milton he says to me “Diane, don't judge me.” I just smiled and said “okay.” This got me thinking: “Did I just judge Milton?” I suppose maybe a person could have: after all, he does have long hair and piercings. Truth be told, Milton is a wonderful person and a good friend of mine. So why was I judging...was I judging?

Sometimes we judge someone when we really don't even know the person. We all judge more than we should. We all walk different paths, live different lives, have different looks, talk differently. In the end you and God are the ones that know the entire story...DON'T JUDGE. The next time you find yourself ready to judge, turn your thoughts around and find something - anything - positive about whom or what you are about to judge.

I challenge you to sit in church and look around you. Find a positive in 10 people of your church family members. Try it when you are shopping. The more you find positives the less you are judging. Don't let your mind wander to the negative or judgmental side. Find the good/positives in this world and the world will be a better place.

In Matthew 7:2 it says “In the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Prayer: *Dear Lord, Help us to pray for others instead of judging them. Help us to be compassionate rather than critical. Help us choose loving thoughts not condemning thoughts. Please bless all those that we have judged. Amen.*

Diane Schlimgen married to Bill with four children: Nichole (Jessie), Megan (Kyle), William (Kelsey), and Michael. We also have four grandchildren: Kaine, Peyton, Landyn and Kylie. I also have a wonderful Church Family that I am blessed to be a part of.



Thursday
March 9

“Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all peoples.”

Psalm 96:3

What an enormous task the Lord has set before us! To tell every nation on earth that the Lord is wonderful and does marvelous things.

When I think of how to handle this massive undertaking, I think of two people I have admired in the past. One is a former UW extension agent (Karen Bogenschneider) who was presenting a lesson on getting organized. Organizing your home, office, and belongings, and setting goals for your life. “Do not feel overwhelmed” she said and use the Swiss Cheese method. Start in a small area and work away at it until there is a small hole or dent in the task.

Picture the Globe as a round of cheese and zero in on tiny Barneveld, WI. Chip away at the cheese/task of declaring God’s glory to the nations by doing small things like being thankful, trying to be kind, being patient, listening, praying for people, volunteering. All of these things make a difference. We never know when just a smile or lending an ear will have a huge impact on someone.

The second person I admire is Mother Theresa. In reading about her, one thing I remember is her talking about making a difference. She use the example of dropping a stone into water and watching the ripple effect. One small act of kindness can cause untold ripples to go out from where it started.

As many hands sew quilts, prepare health kits, and give money to send these things around the world, we are declaring to all nations that God is wonderful.

By thinking of those small holes in the Swiss cheese or the many ripples made by a small pebble, we can take small steps to spread the word of the Lord.

With many new people coming into our small community, be welcoming. Don’t wait to invite neighbors just to summer gatherings. Invite them to our church services now. Invite them to come to the water during this Lenten season.

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father, please help us to be kind, patient, and welcoming. Show us how to dive into your water to send ripples that are far reaching with love. Amen.*

Becky Stauffer loves being with family, reading, singing, playing Baritone in the community bands, and volunteering.



Friday
March 10

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25:40

The bible is filled with references to God’s love, forgiveness, wisdom, hope and many other words that help us to understand Christianity. But for me, there’s no verse in the bible that calls us to action as Christians as much as my chosen verse **Matthew 25:40**. This verse brings to mind one of our members in particular and the actions he took for the least of these in our community. For weeks, we had a homeless person living in our church parking lot, almost invisible. This BLC member reached out to him and even took him, taking him to Farm & Fleet to get parts for his vehicle. He also quietly reaches out to people who have felonies who others might scorn on. He reaches out to those who might not have anywhere to go on holidays with food or even just a thoughtful note. He gives rides to disabled hitchhiker. Truly I tell you, in his humble and unassuming ways, he seems to see Christ in so many of us.

Prayer: *Thank you God for your many blessings. Please help us to see You in the person standing at an intersection holding a sign asking for money. Help us to see You when our first instinct is fear in seeing someone who doesn’t look like us or dress like us or maybe even speak our language. Help us to see You when our inclination is to judge. Help us to see You. Amen.*

Jen Bronsdon lives in a 125-year old house (built by the family of BLC member Delores Valstad Swedlund) in Brigham Township. She is a foster and adoptive parent who has many grown children and 7 grandchildren. She’s also devoted to any number of dogs (She would be happy, however, to have the possums stay out of her house and hasn't quite learned to see Jesus in them...Yet.)



**Saturday
March 11**

“God doesn’t want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible.”
2 Timothy 1:7

God’s gifts can be easily taken for granted. You’ve heard the saying, “appreciate the little things in life.” Time seems to have changed the person I am, to appreciate the changing seasons more. I remember not too long ago when I’d countdown to spring and impatiently wait for the winter and the cold weather to end. Now, with each passing year, I tend to embrace all of the elements of nature more and more. We have a small hunting cabin just 15 minutes away. I’ve come to find that it’s beautiful to be there during all seasons, even in the wintertime that I tended to wish away. Now, it’s easier to appreciate the snow, trails, animals, winter birds and a simple warm fire while looking out over the valley. As we change to spring, the rain hits the tin roof and instead of wishing it away, you appreciate the sound and comforting feeling while reading a book. Summer and fall are always easy to appreciate; the color, the sounds, the warmth and all God has created. When I think of God’s gifts - I think of nature and health and enjoying and sharing the simplest moments in life with all friends and family.

Prayer: *My prayer is for everyone who reads this to remember to embrace God’s gifts and to live life to the fullest. Fill your life with friendships, family and love and share and appreciate all the small moments in life with them. Amen.*

Melissa Lease is a BLC member along with her husband David Lease of 21 years. I am blessed to be both a mom and step-mom to 4 beautiful girls and their families. I love spending time with my friends using any excuse I can come up with to get together for fun and laughs. I credit my husband for my increasing love and appreciation of the outdoors.

Second
Sunday of
Lent
March 12

“For God so loved the world that in the fullness of time he sent his only Son so that those who believe might not perish but have eternal life.”
John 3:16

To get the full meaning of this scripture I feel one should personalize it. Therefore it would read; “God so loved **ME** that in the fullness of time he sent his only Son so that **I** might not perish but have eternal life.” What a tremendous sacrifice God made. Just think of us as parents that we would give up one of our children to save someone else. We need to realize the gift we have been given and not be afraid to share with others.



Prayer: *Dear God, We are so thankful for the gift and promise you have given to us. Help us to never forget the sacrifice you made for not only **ME** but for others as well. Help us to have the courage to pass the message on to others that do not know about this great gift. In your name we pray. Amen.*

Al Wright is a longtime member of the Barneveld UCC Church. Widowed for 9 years, has 5 children, 13 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Past Moderator of the UCC Church. Iowa Native.



Monday
March 13

“Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.”

Psalm 51:11

This is a verse I remember being sung at the close of every worship service I attended with my parents when I was a boy. The tune still is vivid in my mind as the minister would leave the sanctuary at the end of worship service. This verse calls out that as we leave “God’s House,” we remain faithful and live our days being reminded of God’s love and guidance. As a sinner, this is a plea to God to not leave me alone as I embark on my work week and activities. From Monday through Saturday, maintaining focus can become clouded. When the storm clouds move in, I try to take a few moments throughout the day to be reminded that God does work in my life. I can use the excuse that I am too busy with work or have too many other things going on in my life. However, because of becoming older or hopefully becoming wiser, or more importantly that I have grown in my faith, I take time to pause and ask God for his presence and guidance.

Some days are easier to deal with problems than others. But do I know that this day is going to be more, or less challenging than the next? When will I need God’s presence in my life? That’s why this verse takes on more meaning as I grow in my faith. God’s presence is needed in my daily life, and His Spirit is important to guide me throughout the day. There are times when I feel his presence working. There are times I am reminded to pause and ask for his presence to enter. My journey through life is made easier with God’s presence and being guided by His Spirit.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, I thank you for your presence in my life and the wonderful gifts you have provided me. I ask for your continued guidance by your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Bob Johnson my wife is Joan and we have lived in Barneveld since December 1992. Children: Logan lives in Minneapolis, Kylie lives in Platteville. I work for Premier Cooperative in Mineral Point. Joan and I have been members of Barneveld Lutheran Church since 1993.



Tuesday
March 14

“Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near.”

Isaiah 55:6

I once called upon the Lord while he was near. My son was a baby, strapped in his car seat. There had been a winter storm; I wasn't used to driving the station wagon. So when I hit a patch of black ice and braked at the wrong time, my car began to spin. It is not good to do a doughnut on the Interstate. I called out “God be with me! God be with me!” God was with us. No other cars were coming. We landed on the shoulder, unharmed, facing the wrong direction.

There was another time God was near. My son is adopted from Vietnam. I had gone to church at the Catholic cathedral in Saigon the day we were to travel to the orphanage and meet our baby. I stopped at a painting of the Madonna and Baby Jesus, and started to cry. Years of struggling with infertility, months of adoption paperwork, a lifetime of waiting—all were about to end. God wept for joy with me.

And there was the time I was bike riding, miles from home, and some debris flew into my eye. It hurt and I was afraid to ride on, so I stopped at a farm house. The farmer let me use his bathroom mirror. When I couldn't get the bug or whatever it was from my eye, the farmer was able to fish it out. I opened my eyes and saw him. For a moment I thought sure I was seeing Christ and experiencing Christ's healing. That old man was so beautiful!

God can always be found. God is always near. It is our job to seek God. We seek by being prepared to recognize God's presence, far away or close to home. We seek by paying attention to unexpected gifts. We seek by knowing that God stands by us, seeking us, seeking our knowledge of him. We are always free to cry out for God's aid, forgiveness, protection, and blessing.

Prayer: *God of the emergency and tranquil moments. God of the kitchen and office. God of the classroom and warehouse floor. God of our daily lives and our extraordinary challenges. Teach us to look for you and to call your name wherever we are, for that is the place where you are. Amen.*

Carolyn Kennedy is the pastor at Barneveld Congregational UCC. She has a husband, son, three step-kids and three cats.



Wednesday
March 15

“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.”

Psalm 23:1-3

When I hear the phrase, “The Lord is my shepherd” I think of the sweetest little prayer that my daughter Hadley and I read.

*O Lord, I'm just a little lamb
Who knows not where to go.
Sometimes I wander far away,
But you still love me so.
O Lord, I'm just a little lamb
In a world so big and grand.
Lord, lead me like a shepherd
Never let go of my hand!*

God is my shepherd, and I am his sheep. He has promised to guide me, love me, and provide me with everything that I **NEED**, not necessarily the things I want. And like a sheep, I can get lost, scared, and easily discouraged, but I know that as long as I have God as my shepherd, I will be greatly blessed with his promises. It's very easy to be distracted, sin, and to stray from God. In fact, I've done it myself several times. Time and time again, I feel God calling me back like the lost sheep that I am. Like always, my shepherd forgives me and loves me. By knowing this with faith and trust, I will become the woman that he wants me to become.

Prayer: *Dear God, may you give us guidance and take control of our lives and lead us to the path of righteousness and everlasting life. Amen.*

Elisabeth Taylor is a member of BLC since childhood. I'm married to Ben with two sweet little girls, Hadley (3) and Everly (1) whom all keep me really busy. I love to hang out with family, cook and go antiquing.



Thursday
March 16

“Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD,
you know it completely.”
Psalm 139:4

Many times throughout the day, I will have a little chat with God in my head. I have always believed that I can “meditate” my prayers as well as speak them. I have heard Psalms 139:4 many times throughout my life but this activity made me really think about and research the meaning of prayer and communicating with God.

Over my lifetime, I have mostly prayed for the things I “want” and threw in a little thank you for the giving of the things I need. I remember quite well coming home from an ambulance call on the night of the tornado and hearing that the town had been hit by a tornado. The town is gone. Our crew just imagined the devastation we would find and of course were worried sick about our own families. The group in the back of the rig prayed together on the trip back home. They prayed to keep our loved ones safe and to help us do what was needed once we were back in town. Prayer, to me, is largely spoken prayer. I have encouraged my children and grandchildren over the years to compose or spontaneously say a prayer at our family gatherings. I have been touched deeply by the thought and tenderness displayed by all. I believe it is important to teach our young people how to pray.

Different parts of the bible stress that we try to only think good things-only do good deeds. WE are responsible for our THOUGHTS – not just our spoken words and actions. We need to be critical thinkers but also to be loving/forgiving thinkers. If we try to pattern ourselves after our Lord, I think we can naturally train ourselves to be more God-like. This is important because God hears what we say and knows what we mean. Be sincere when you say something, thus being true to your own self.

***Prayer:** Help us to pray to our Lord. Help us to speak to the Lord. Speaking to the Lord (much like speaking to our family members) is loving, humbling, comforting and in the favor of our Lord. Amen*

Peggy Jones has been a member of BLC for about 45 years and married to Bill for just about that same time. We have 3 children and 6 grandchildren and are living happily ever after!!



Friday
March 17

“If I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

1 Corinthians 13:2

Can you imagine what it would be like to live without love?

Think of all the possible achievements we may make during the course of our lives: learning to walk, talk, graduating from school, getting a job, promotions, buying a new car, buying a new home, getting married, having children ... the list goes on.

Now think ...

What if there wasn't someone to pick you up to hug and kiss you when you took your first step or spoke your first word?

What if there was no one to congratulate you and tell you how proud they were of you when you graduated or just got your promotion.?

What if there was no one to share a ride in your car or share your home? What if there was no family, friends or children to tell you they love you and you love them?

You can have all the physical items in the world. You can have all the knowledge one could hope to possess. You can be the strongest, fastest, smartest person. But if you do not have love, none of these things would mean anything.

God is love. Love is everything. Love truly is what makes the world go 'round. Without love, we truly are nothing.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, help me, my family and my community continue to grow in love and faith. Let us not only say the words that we are brothers and sisters, but truly feel that bond so that we are there for each other in good times and bad. Amen.*

Karen Heitke and my family has lived in Barneveld for 5 years. We are blessed to live in a community that is grounded in love of their neighbors. We have felt only kindness since the time we moved here. My life mission is to live through spiritual faith and simple living to achieve peace that I can share with my family, friends and service to others.



**Saturday
March 18**

“Do not reply evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called-that you might inherit a blessing.”

1 Peter 3:9

Well Shoot! Doesn't that sound just too easy? It's a little spooky that this was written 2000 years ago and yet as human beings we still can't seem to figure out how to do it. This would have been written at a time when most folks couldn't read or write and had little or no education. We are certainly not in that boat and yet this verse still pertains to us. I wonder if it isn't because we don't want to project weakness. After all, if someone is evil or abuses us, we just can't sit there and take it, we need to do something bigger or worse to make sure everyone knows how strong we are...right? It just wouldn't be right to let someone get away with it. I suspect it's been like this for a very long time. My word in confirmation is "Strength" and it was taught to me by Sam Moyer when he was in confirmation. I'm fortunate to have lived long enough for Sam to teach me what that's all about. I assumed that Sam and the rest of the boys chose the word because they liked what the word meant - Big and Strong. I didn't have to know Sam very long before I realized that big and strong was not all that Sam was about. It had to do with something much larger than that, something that lived deep inside him that kept him coming to church every Sunday and confirmation every Wednesday even though he could have had plenty or reasons not to. Most Sundays and Wednesday's you would find him walking to church and of all the times I asked him if he wanted a ride, he rarely accepted and with a smile said "no thank you." It seems weird but I found that not repaying evil for evil is really a show of strength not weakness.

Prayer: *Gracious God, Let us pray that we all find a way to not be weak and reply evil for evil. Let us pray that we find inner strength that we may repay evil with a blessing and find favor with you.
In Jesus name we pray. Amen.*

Jeff Ziegler is a member of BLC for 30 years and connected to the church with Council and Confirmation for most of that time. I work from home and love being part of the Barneveld Community.



Third
Sunday of
Lent
March 19

“The LORD answered “I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.”

Exodus 17:6

At the age of 36 years old, I found myself to be an alcoholic. I had a wife and two young children, living in a rented duplex and was a self-employed electrical contractor. I had destroyed our marriage, run up debt and lost the trust from everyone close to me. I was removed from our home and was displaced from my family. For the first time in my life, I was scared. I seek help from a group of men who had gone through what I was going through. They all seemed to talk about a loving God and how he could help me to keep sober and help me change the way I was living. I had always feared God and thought he was a punishing God. Why would God want to help me? I was a bad person who only cared for himself. So it was hard for me to trust this group of men and God. Then one day, I was installing wiring in a new home. I was a couple months sober and had a lot of emotional problems. My heart was heavy and I couldn't hardly function as a human being. The burden of the past was haunting me and being away from my family was tearing me up inside. I was going nuts and I couldn't take it any longer. In this house that I was working on, I dropped to my knees in total surrender. I asked God to take all my problems, everything, just take it, I can't handle it any more. For a moment, I felt peace and serenity like I've never known it before. Then the craziness came back. But in that short moment, I knew that something was happening to me. I was starting to trust God to run my life. Every day since, I turn my will and my life over to the care of God when I LET HIM.

Prayer: *God, never let me think that I can stand by myself, and not need you. Amen.*

Greg A Clerkin Recovering alcoholic for 21 years. Electrical Contractor for 30 years. I have a son and a daughter.



Monday
March 20

“A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep and they went and woke him up saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”

Matthew 8:24-25

I am an LPN at the Madison VA Hospital. For over 30 years I have had the privilege to work with some of the bravest men and women ever. They have told me stories of great sacrifice, of the horrors of being in war far away from family and friends, of seeing the destruction of war and how much loss of life war creates. They have survived the roughest storms that I can imagine, and many times they have told me that they have survived because of their belief in God. They believed that God was in the “foxhole” and they have told me of the miracles they have seen. They have told me the power of prayer and their belief is what has helped them through.

Almost 33 years ago our community/village was torn apart from the Barneveld tornado. For me this was one of the roughest storms in my life. I know that for me the night of the tornado and for many months after I needed and believed that God was by my side, helping me through the storm. Barneveld saw much destruction and loss of life, but Barneveld also witnessed many miracles that night, God saw us through the roughest storm and because of this we were able to rebuild and become the strong community that we are today.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, we pray that during the times of our lives when we feel we will not survive the storm that you have given us the strength to survive, and because of our belief in you and with the knowledge of your love for us that the roughest seas will one day be peaceful and calm. Amen.*

Jo Ellen Uptegraw married to Roger and this year we will celebrate 40 years together. We have three grown children - Sara, Eric and Jenny. We have four Grandchildren - Blake, Frankie Jo, Greysen and Rylee. I have been the BLC treasurer for 20 years.

Tuesday
March 21

“The one who endures to the end will be saved.”
Mark 13:13

What a wonderful gift we have been promised! The gift of eternal life. No strings attached. We don't have to do anything special or be anyone special to receive this gift. We receive it because we are a child of God. He has called us by name. He doesn't say it will be easy. As a matter of fact, most times it will be difficult to live a life of Christ. But through HOPE and PROMISE, we will be saved into eternal life if we endure.



Prayer: *Oh God, you are a God full of promise and hope, even when we find it difficult to follow. Give us strength to follow in your footsteps. Keep us faithful unto death so we can receive the Crown of Life. Amen.*

Joann Manteufel is a lifelong member at BLC. Married to David for 42 years. Proud Grandparent of 6 Grandchildren. Drew has entered into eternal life which make the 5 so special.



Wednesday
March 22

“As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.”

Ephesians 6:15

In Memory of Aletha Myers.....a community soul

"Our hearts connect us, our memories remind us and hopefully our lives will reflect the things she tried to teach us. What the heart has once owned it shall never loose."

Be Ready

I can't remember a time when my mother wasn't ready. Whenever anyone dropped by our house, whether the visit was announced or unannounced, she was primed and prepared. The house was always neat. There was always enough food to share--or to stretch. My mother believed in having a hospitable home, a place where anyone could drop in, no matter the time or the weather. My mother was never fanatic about this. Rather, it was just part of her nature. Any visitor to our house always got the impression that his or her coming was anticipated and prepared for. Any visitor to our house who thought that was right.

Aletha's Favorite prayer.....

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive: it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Rosann Myers after standing on the sidelines for five years Coach Jim Myers noticed me...we were married one week after the tornado. After teaching for 21 years my dream of being a second grade teacher came true and that is currently what I am teaching today. We surprised the community and ourselves by announcing we were having a baby, Matthew came into our world and filled our families with joy. He will graduate in June.



Thursday
March 23

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

Ephesians 4:32

As a Confirmation Small Group Leader, I had to pick a word and corresponding verse. I chose the word compassion. When I googled the word compassion in the Bible, I didn't find my word but I found several references to the words kind and kindness.

The letter of Paul to the Ephesians began by stating that we have all fallen away from God but He, who is rich in mercy and grace, has blessed those who believe in Him. He wants us to live with compassion in our hearts.

My first job, that spanned over 24 years, was as an Economic Support Specialist, or “welfare worker.” I determined eligibility for AFDC, Medical Assistance, Food Stamps, General Assistance and Refugee Assistance for families, individuals and resident aliens. Working directly with individuals and families struggling to meet their basic needs gave me a different perspective of “welfare people.” I became less judgmental as I watched so many people trying desperately to get out of the welfare cycle. Unfortunately, sometimes this was a futile attempt, especially for those living in rural areas where resources were next to nonexistent. Working with my clients helped sow the seeds for empathy and compassion in me. I remember the phrase “What Would Jesus Do?” I used to think the WWJD bracelets were kind of corny. Now, I try to remind myself, on a regular basis, what *would* Jesus do. Yes, I believe God helps those who help themselves. But sometimes, that's not enough. When decent paying jobs are scarce, transportation, safe housing and quality child care expenses are limited and/or unaffordable, and food expenses are high, some people do need extra compassion and assistance from their fellow man. We, as God's chosen, are expected to try to do as Jesus did, as much as we can. The catch phrase “Practice random acts of kindness” is an easy way to start remembering to be kind.

Prayer: *Father, we are grateful for the rope holders who've helped pull us out of despairing situations. Those who have given us an uplifting message, prayed on our behalf, given of their time and expertise to help us in our times of need. We, too, want to be rope holders and offer words of encouragement, be a listening ear and extend tender compassion and mercy to others in need. Help us to be Your hand, extended to those in need. We pray. Amen.*

Deb Piquette is a very active member of BLC since 1998. After 38 years I am recently retired from Dane County Human Services. When not volunteering, I love digging in my flower beds and traveling.



Friday
March 24

“Only you (GOD) know what is in every human heart.”
I Kings 8:39

Could I truly forgive? We have seen the documentaries on folks that have forgiven others for terrible crimes onto themselves or their family. They forgive because of their faith; because of the trust in God and what He knows to be in the human heart even if deep deep down. When I was a child, I would talk to God all the time, for hours at a time. Growing up on the farm when I would take long walks through the woods or when I was with the animals, I would talk to God. My sister is eight years younger than me so sometimes God is all I had to talk to. Now that I am older and my life is filled to the brim, I admittedly only talk to God every night, at church, and when I need something or I am thankful for something. Honestly, I don't think I could forgive someone for a terrible crime onto my family or friends even knowing that God knows there is good in everyone's heart. (I pray every day I never have to find out!) Does he truly expect us to forgive everything no matter how bad? - *deal with everyone according to all they do*. Maybe I need to talk to God more.

Prayer: *Dear God, I hope everyone reading this will find your connection with God however or wherever it may be. Amen.*

Shayla Danz along with my husband Mitch live in Barneveld with our two girls Kyra (9) and Kenzie (7). We love to spend time with family, friends and our pets. We are your typical Wisconsin family who like to cheer on the Packers, Badgers, Brewers and The Barneveld Golden Eagles.



Saturday
March 25

“Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink,” you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

John 4:10

Living water...water we need for our own spiritual health. Jesus says we will never be thirsty again when we drink of his water. Never thirsty again, how awesome that is to think about! Jesus gives us all we need, yet how often do we think that we need more. We don't need as much as we think or as society tells us.

As I read this scripture verse and the story it came from (Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman at the well), I thought of the baby inside my womb and the other moms who are pregnant in our community and around the world. He or she is fully relying on me for their nutrients and growth. I take the responsibility of giving our baby all it needs very seriously. I think of that often, especially when I tell Jim “the baby needs chocolate ice cream.” But really how miraculous is it that a baby can grow and thrive only on what the mother gives it? Similarly, we can grow and thrive when we fully rely on Jesus in our lives. Maybe the next time you go to communion think of yourself going back to the womb, fully relying on Jesus' nourishment. Or perhaps dip your hand into the baptismal font, remind yourself of Jesus' Living Water.

Prayer: *Loving God, thank you for giving us all we ever need through your Living Water. Help us to fully rely on you in all aspects of our lives. Amen.*

Amy Hearne wife to Jim and proud mom of Anna and baby #2 coming this summer. As a Bridge leader, I love being able to share my faith with the 5th and 6th graders. I am also happy to be a part of such a welcoming and friendly BLC community!



**Fourth
Sunday of
Lent
March 26**

“The LORD said to Samuel, “Take no notice of his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him; God does not see as human beings see; they look at appearances but God looks at the heart.”
Samuel 16:7

The first time I read this verse I saw it as the biblical version of “don’t judge a book by its cover.” Something we all have heard, but also catch ourselves constantly doing. When we see someone new, we look at their bodily features to determine the type of person they are; even if this is just a glimpse of who the person is. God doesn’t want us to do this. He wants us to remember and see that one’s physical attributes do not tell us whether or not they are pure.

This can also reflect it back to ourselves. When He sees you, God does not look at the crookedness of your nose that only you notice, or the number that shows up when you step on the scale. All the imperfections that worry us or hold us back are gone in God’s eyes. When he looks at each and every one of us, he sees what lies in our hearts.

When growing up I struggled with how to be comfortable in my own body, and the un-worded expectations that social media seems to have on us.

Prayer: *Dear God let us learn to look at others and see their heart rather than their physical bodies, and when you look at yourself in mirror....see your own heart. See the things you’ve done for others and the ways you can better who you are as a person. Amen.*

Corissa Lease is a member of BLC and daughter of David and Melissa Lease. I am the youngest of their 4 girls. I am an Aunt of 3 nephews and 2 nieces. I like making memories with my family and friends. I find my most strength in faith when spending time outdoors.



Monday
March 27

“Praise his name with dancing; play drums and harps in praise of him.”

Psalm 149:3

As Christians, we have many ways of praising our Lord and the Holy Spirit. Whether it is singing, dancing, praying, or giving our offering. Whatever way it is we praise Him.

I feel that God has been with me through my performing arts journey the past few years. Whether it has been healing through a painful and sad day or to do my best or even just getting me through a hard performance. God has been my top go to person. He has been with me through the tough times in school, performing arts and just life in general. GOD is with me and with US!



Prayer: *Dear God thank you for each and every one of our gifts that we can praise you with. Amen.*

Evan Hathaway attends Barneveld Middle School. I am the son of Josh and Alycia Hathaway and I have and 2 siblings Elliot and Emma Hathaway. I am highly engaged in dance 4-5 nights a week at Forte Studios in Mount Horeb. I am also active in the Bridge program and Bell Choir.



Tuesday
March 28

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

John 14:27

This scripture is a message from Jesus to his disciples letting them know that he will soon be leaving them, but promises that he would return. He tells them to not let their hearts be troubled but believe in his promises. All of us have had times in our lives when we feel like God has given us more heartache and sorrow than we can handle. A few years ago I felt this way when I lost my mother, my younger brother and my daughter-in-law all to cancer within a year and a half. I did not understand why our family had to endure so much loss and heartache and could not come to peace with it. I struggled with questions of “Why our family?” “Why take such wonderful people who have so much left to contribute to this world?” “Why did they have to suffer so much?” I finally realized that I was looking and searching for peace and answers that the world gives and not the peace that the Lord gives. I didn’t get answers to all of those questions; but I opened my heart to God’s healing and as he promises he brought an end to my troubled heart, he stilled the storm and quieted the waves. God’s peace does pass all understanding and is there for us if we just open our hearts to it.

Prayer: *Thank you, loving Father, for your love, patience and compassion and for healing our troubled and empty hearts.*

Thank you for helping us to find peace and for healing our broken spirit. Amen.

Peggy Bilse is a long time member of BLC. Married to Denny for 45 years, mother to 4 sons: Bryan, Brad, Brent & Brock, and grandmother to 8 grandchildren. I am a retired Appointment and Treatment Coordinator at Orthodontic Specialists of Madison and love to read, travel and spend time with family.



Wednesday
March 29

“O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.”
Psalm 34:8

Being in relationship with God will help you through the hard times in life. I was raised in the church and have known God forever. Life is not easy; I have experienced many bumps in the road. My dad died when I was in 8th grade after a battle with pancreatic cancer. At this time I started talking to God in prayer about a lot of things. As I became a young adult I kind of forgot about God and wandered on my own. There were times when I came back and remembered I needed to put my life in God's hands and then I would go back to trying to handle things on my own. I married at age 21. There were good times, but there were tough times, like when we didn't know where the next dollar for groceries or our next tank of gas to go to work was coming from. We were relying on ourselves. Then after 2 ½ years of marriage, my husband died in an accident. I was four months pregnant with our first child, and my world was shattered! Just 3-4 weeks before his death, we had decided maybe we needed to go to church again, as we were living near the congregation my husband had grown up in. At this wrecked time in my life I found prayer again, and I began talking to God asking him to just get me through the next day. God had not left me; he carried me through this awful time and beyond. Then God put a wonderful man in my life who loved me and my child and we married. God is an everyday part of my life, he is my refuge. Since opening my heart and letting God lead my life I have never wondered where the next tank of gas or food on the table was coming from. There have been dark days but my Lord and Savior was there with me. God is always there—open your heart and mind and let him guide your life and he will provide what you need.

Prayer: *Lord God, thank you for always being there, for never giving up on us. You are the bread of life, the water that quenches our thirst, you are my REFUGE. Amen.*

Marcia Thompson mother, grandmother, BLC church secretary and farm wife who lives in Barneveld.



Thursday
March 30

“Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

John 6:68

Studying the 6th chapter of John and the story of the feeding of the multitudes, I was struck by the power of Jesus’ ministry. It describes a period when He is at his most popular with the people, and his disciples are just coming to accept him as the Son of God. Their perceptions of what is possible in God are blown wide open with the feeding of the multitudes. It is in this new expansion of consciousness that the disciples are told by Jesus that He is the way to eternal life. We are told many disciples left him at that point, saying, “This is a hard teaching.”

Accepting that Christ is with us is a hard teaching. If we truly believe this, there is much to give up. In God there are no limits. I find so often in my own life how easy it is to get caught up in the trials and troubles of life and create a cage in my mind that keeps me from experiencing God in my life and serving Him. In these times when I feel so limited, it helps if I can step away from focusing on myself and instead focus on serving God. It has taken me a long time to realize that being happy and at peace is not the end but a byproduct of living in Christ’s service. Opening our hearts in surrender to the immensity and omnipotence of God’s love, we find the peace that passeth understanding.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, thank you for showing us the power and glory of your love through Christ. Help us to see the Big Picture and serve you always. Your peace is like a river. Amen.*

Earlene Laudin lives in rural Barneveld with her husband Tom and their two cats, Bernie and Ed. When not working at the UW Digestive Health Center as an RN, I keep busy with gardening, supporting social justice and environmental action, and assisting my husband Tom at local art fairs where he displays his furniture collection.



Friday
March 31

“For their hunger you gave them bread from heaven, and for their thirst you brought water for them out of the rock, and you told them to go to possess the land you swore to give them.”

Nehemiah 9:15

Those whose lives were at risk when driven into exile in a foreign land, are now freed and on the journey back to their homeland. They thirst on the journey through this arid land. The unexpected water spurting fresh and clean from the rock means there is life again.

I am reminded of the journey of the Water Protectors in the contested land near Standing Rock. Native peoples seek to protect the waters for their children and for the children of all those down stream. The 2016 ELCA Church wide Assembly passed a resolution pledging "to practice accompaniment with Native peoples." Many of us have been petitioning, divesting and praying in solidarity with the Water Protectors. We know their journey is bound up with our own journey. When they are at risk of dying of thirst, so are we. When they find life-giving waters, so do we.

We know that our liberation is bound up in the liberation of others. We journey together to protect our children, and all the children of the world.

Prayer: *Giver of life-saving waters, remind us that we do not journey alone. You are with us. And our journey is bound up with the journey of many others. Teach us to better accompany each other in our journeys. Guide all of us to your saving waters. Amen.*

Mary Kay Baum grew up on a family dairy farm North of Appleton. Rain affected our fields. The PCB's in the nearby Fox River has likely affected the neurological health of family members. Wetlands are natural filters from pollution. I love to visit the wetland in the Ridgeway Pine Relict State Natural Area near my home. My husband and son are Oneida Nation. My daughter is Menominee and Ojibwe. These Indian Nations are working hard to protect the waters of Wisconsin. Their efforts help protect all of us.



Saturday
April 1

“When Peter noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Matthew 14:30

As I sit at my home computer on a wonderful sunny morning I can't help but notice both of my wind chimes are chiming away just outside my window! Many days on our farm we can't escape the wind. (We have been told that we are one of the highest points in Iowa County.) On warm, balmy, summer days the wind is a wonderful blessing but my guess is if you asked my husband Dave this morning what he thought of the wind today he would probably not use the word “wonderful” to describe it.

The wind can be both a curse and a blessing. As many in our congregation can attest to, the wind and it's velocity can change your life in the matter of a moment. When the tornado came through in 1984 I am certain many residents of Barneveld had their faith tested. Why us? How do we recover? Where do we start? Can we do it? Why, why, why?

As in the scripture Peter asked Jesus to settle the wind so that he could join him on the water. Peter's faith wavered and he starts to sink.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It's a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.” ²⁸ “Lord, if it's you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹ “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

God tells us to be strong and to have faith even in difficult times even when it seems as though there may be no hope. He reaches his hand to us as a lifeline as he did to Peter. We as Christians need to not only be open to God's promise that he is there for us, but we also need to be there and extend our hands to others that are of “little faith.”

My Prayer for each and everyone of us is that we work on reminding ourselves that we need to stay strong in our faith, even in the toughest of times. Some days will be calm and peaceful and full of hope and other days will be trying and a challenge. Stay full of faith. Amen.

Rochelle Lee along with my husband Dave have walked our faith journey together for nearly 40 years. We have 4 children and 5 grandchildren. Faith is our inspiration and our legacy to everyone is “Christ First.”



**Fifth Sunday
Of Lent
April 2**

“You, however, live not by the flesh but by the Spirit since the Spirit of God has made a home in you.”

Romans 8:9

Growing up I always wanted Jesus in my heart. Dad’s work took him far from home and Mom didn’t drive which meant daily prayers but no Sunday school - I wanted more! Two of my young Catholic friends talked about their catechism - I envied them! Visiting my Grandma Cox’s church inspired me to paint her a collage of God’s creations. (*She saved it her whole life*). My neighbor/parents would occasionally take me to Perry Lutheran - the aroma of their candles touched my soul! After graduation, I lived in Madison and had a spiritual roommate who sang hymns. She played the organ at her church – I marveled over her spiritual talents! On Friday, October 13th, 1972 God brought Dick Reeson into my life. Our dates started by first going to St. Ignatius Catholic Church. Soon I was confirmed Catholic and Dick gave me my first Bible for Christmas. Eventually I started collecting spiritual stories, thoughts, and verses (especially from my boss, Dr. Grove). God surrounded me with people who planted seeds.

Growing up, the distance between my heart and Christ seemed so immense.....how could I ever have hoped to have a heart like Jesus? What I didn’t know was that I already had it. Because we believe in him, he makes our heart his home. Paul said, “Christ lives in me.”

Our Lord’s first recorded sermon began with “The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me”. He was led by the Spirit. He is pure; we can be greedy. He is peaceful; we get annoyed. He is pleasant; we get cranky. We are fearful; he is trusting. He wipes away our tears, mops away the perspiration, and softens our worrying brows. He tattoos our name on the palm of his hand. His thoughts of us outnumber the sand on the shore. We never escape his sight. I didn’t need a special spiritual formula. I believed in Christ and his spirit was already in me..... it took me awhile before I “heard” his music!

Didn’t the one who held the universe in the palm of his hand take the nail at the cross for all of us?.....Did you hear him whisper?.....
“I did this just for you!”

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the gift of the Holy Spirit. To know that the power of the same Spirit, who helped create the universe, lives inside of us, blesses us, molds us, and can take our breath away with wonder and awe. We are forever grateful. Amen.*

Cindy Reeson 42 years of growing in faith together with Dick Reeson, mother to two girls and grandmother to two girls. 2017 marks the 40th year of living in Barneveld and the 30th year with BLC.



Monday
April 3

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.”

Revelation 22:1-2

As a hairdresser I am surrounded by a lot of people from different walks of life. They will tell you happy and sad events that take place in their lives. My neighboring hairstylist was working on her client, who was very distraught and was feeling hopeless. This woman was very ill - she needed a transplant. My neighboring hairstylist that was working on her hair knew that my mother was a transplant survivor, so she came to me to see if I would have some encouraging words for her client. I was a little nervous and hesitant to talk to her only because I knew I wanted to say the right words. I then prayed “*Please Lord give me the words to comfort this woman!*” The client was inquiring on how our family had gotten through such a difficult time. Before I could say the words she said “don’t bring up Jesus.” With a tender and caring way I said, “Jesus did get us through this difficult time.” *We never stopped praying.* This client went quiet. I told her not to give up HOPE and that I would help by praying for her. Six months went by before I saw this woman back in the Salon. She came up to me with a smile on her face and told me she received her transplant. We BOTH praised God! The river of the water of life was flowing through me. The Holy Spirit worked through me so I could find the right words to say to her.

Will you accept the water of life that is given to us that comes from the river that never stops flowing?

Prayer: *Dear God let us pray that we will always let the Holy Spirit live with us, so that we can shine bright as crystal. Amen.*

Terry Nelson is married to Otis. Being a hairdresser is a very gratifying profession. I love to make people look and feel beautiful on the inside and outside. I love to garden and go for walks in the country.



Tuesday
April 4

“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:7

As I sat down to write a peaceful devotion my children came into the room arguing. I was listening to both sides of the dispute and took the side of my daughter and reprimanded my teenage son. He then proclaimed “You are the worst mother I had ever had!” Well those weren’t the inspiring words I was hoping for. I had to smirk, apparently, I was unaware I have some competition in the mother category. I would like to meet her, maybe she can take him on these hormonal roller coaster days. Our household is hardly ever peaceful, with so many different personalities, it is hard for everyone to “get along.” Peace on the external level is not a reflection of our inner peace. I know our household has the deepest love for each other, even though it is not expressed the best all the time.

I wasn’t going to let a hurtful statement permeate my heart or mind. We are given challenges and difficulties in life situations that we don’t agree with. God knows what is in our hearts and minds before we express it through prayer. He knows when to give us strength and patience. He gently guides us to be grateful, even if we are facing struggles. Parenthood can be the most rewarding and humbling duty God gives us.

During the season of Lent, it gives us an opportunity to become closer with God, to restore our faith in Him. Be thankful for His blessings and companionship. Be still and pray with Him even when our lives are chaotic. Listen for God’s guidance.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, help us to remember Your peace is always with us. We thank and trust You always. In our difficult struggles may we open up ourselves to you. Amen.*

Melanie Markhardt, I have 3 children. I have been teaching confirmation for 2 years at BLC. My husband Paul, and our family live on a beef farm outside of Barneveld. We also operate my husband’s 3rd generation business out of Verona.



Wednesday
April 5

“As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.”

Galatians 6:10

Each year around Christmas time we often hear the saying, “It is better to give than to receive,” and anyone who has given someone special *the perfect gift* knows exactly why this saying is true. The feeling that giving creates is so much deeper and longer lasting than the feeling created by receiving a material item that tends to be forgotten about in a few short weeks. Perhaps the feeling we get when we give is Christ’s love growing inside of us. This saying can and should be applied to your everyday life; not only during the Christmas, Lent, and Easter seasons, but all year long. It takes very little, if any, extra effort to begin giving more of yourself—hold the door open for the person behind you; make eye contact, smile, and actually acknowledge your waiter/waitress or the person checking you out at the grocery store; saying “Hello” to a stranger on the street—and with each act of kindness, you will feel Christ’s love continue to grow. If you are so moved, don’t stop at the simple gestures, but take the extra effort to do a little more and go where Christ’s love guides you. Every day we hear about all of the problems in our community, nation, and world; maybe by using Christ’s love as our guide we can start making the world a better place, one considerate gesture at a time.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, Please watch over me and help me to consider others in my thoughts, words, and actions today and every day.*

Also, please watch over all those who need you today.

Help them to be happy, healthy, and safe. In Jesus name, Amen.

David and Danielle Moyer. We grew up in BLC, were confirmed here in 2002, and married here in 2011. We have two children, a four-year-old daughter Makena and a two-year-old son Mason, and our third child is due to arrive in March.



Thursday
April 6

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Believe in God, believe also in me.”
John 14:1

Fear. It is a raw feeling produced by future danger, evil, pain, etc. The threat can be real or imagined. It consumes each of us—probably daily—in some form or manner. Should it? Can we learn to live a life without fear?

John 14 from the Bible describes the raw feeling — the fear — the disciples were experiencing as Jesus prepared them for the coming hours and days before his death. It also provides comfort to the disciples for the future. We learn God has a plan. He is preparing their place in Heaven for when their time is done.

While the details are unknown to all but Him, He also has a plan for each of us. As we proceed through life with a sense of uncertainty, we should learn to face our future without fear. We limit ourselves and the places and heights we can reach by living in fear. “What doesn’t kill you will make you stronger.” God has tasked us with obstacles we can handle, though they may seem insurmountable at the time.

Live your life through faith. Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, mind, body, and soul. Our plan has been determined. While we cannot control or prevent the hardships of life, find strength in knowing we have the power to get through them because of Him.

Perhaps it is not about living a life without fear, but learning to trust your fears. *Believe in God; Believe in Me.*

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for joining us as we learn to walk through our life of faith. We can overcome our fears by placing our trust in You. We will live our life faithfully so when the plan You have for us is finished, we are ready. We will find strength in knowing You are preparing our place in Heaven and we look forward to the day we met. Amen.*

Megan Mieden works in human resources and is a student pursuing a Masters in Business Administration. She is married to Kyle with two beautiful girls Landyn and Kylie. She helps coordinate the “Holy Moly” education program for the youth here at BLC.



Friday
April 7

“Those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the work and accept it and bear fruit.”

Mark 4:20

Being a farmer and a crop adjuster, you probably would expect me to write about the sower who scattered seeds on four different types of soil and how the good soil received the seeds. The story symbolizes the farmer sharing Jesus to people, the seed is the Word of God and the soil represents the condition of our hearts. Surprisingly, I never cared for crop farming. Things have changed so much over the years from horse-drawn planters to GPS tractors with precision accuracy. My passion is more about raising good Holstein heifers for the show ring. The journey starts by researching genetics for the best bull to mate with your greatest cow and giving that cow all your attention so you'll get a healthy calf. Waiting for the day (or night) for the new calf is almost like waiting for our Lord's birth in the manger. As soon as possible, Colostrum is given to the new born to get her off to a healthy start. Lots of hours are spent grooming the calf, taming her, teaching her to lead and giving her the right combination of feed. All this preparation leads up to “show day” - family fun time. Sometimes there are illnesses, challenges and disappointments – somewhat similar to planting seeds on poor or good soil with poor or good weather. I think it's all so similar; it's all God's miracles. To help endure all things, preparation is important whether preparing the seed, preparing the calf or preparing for our eternal life in Heaven. There are challenges and there are rewards - don't we all hope to reap a harvest of goodness? God wants us to grow in faith, he wants us to prepare.

Prayer: *is for the farmer that they continue to have faith - faith in good weather, in good crops, great cattle, better markets, good seed, and with a passion and endurance for what they love. Amen.*

Dick Reeson and his wife Cindy have lived on the “Hopeful Hundred” farm for 40 years. Their third generation (Kyra and Kenzie) and daughters (Shayla and Lacey) also have a passion for showing Holsteins (and riding horses). It's all about Faith, Family, Friends and the Farm (in that order).



Saturday
April 8

“If any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.”

Peter 4:16

1 Peter 4:16 talks about suffering as a Christian and nobody suffered more than Jesus did on the cross, so there is no suffering that we can go through that would compare to how Jesus suffered. Jesus went through his suffering to fulfill scripture and to save us from our transgressions. It is through his suffering that we glorify him and suffer because we call ourselves people of God.

As people of God we need to glorify because of the suffering he went through. There is shining light here because of the suffering Jesus endured, we know what lies ahead for us. Knowing this makes our suffering bearable as we glorify his name.

Yes, glorifying his name does come with suffering on our part as many tend to look away from us or down at us and wonder why we continue to glorify him. Well, we know why we do it and that is because of Jesus's suffering for us. This is a hard concept to explain too many as they do not see or understand as we do. And we all know how hard it can be to explain to non-believers just what Jesus did for us and why. This is where our suffering comes from, not understanding why they do not believe as we do.

We understand what he went through and why. He took our place on the cross, suffering for us, so we can live in eternal peace when our journey here is complete. Because of this, we DO glorify His name as children of God who sent his son to suffer for us.

We each carry our suffering for Jesus in different ways. Some like me keep things in and bare our cross in our own way and others seek help or talk outwardly about it. Regardless of how you handle your suffering, remember you are glorifying God because he sent his son to save us!

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for all the blessings you have bestowed upon my family and me. You truly are the one who blesses all who follow you. Amen.*

Dennis Baumann has been a member at Barneveld Lutheran for nearly 20 years. I have served on council two separate times, been an usher coordinator, confirmation leader, and various other duties. I currently teach fifth grade in the Dodgeville School District. I am married to Dawn for 28 years, and we have one daughter who is 22.



**Palm
Sunday
April 9**

“For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

Isaiah 55:12

Nature is a place of peace and tranquility for me. It's beauty, mystery, and wonder has always been so intriguing. How does Mother Nature cleanse my heart and soul?

I'll tell you how! It's fishing out of my kayak for chunky largemouth bass and feisty big musky, crouching by a massive Burr Oak tree while calling in a gobbling tom turkey, or snowshoeing down a fresh powdery snow trail on a sunny winter's day.

Mother Nature can nurture your heart and soul. Simplistic will do! Take a walk around your yard and notice the sights and sounds of your natural surroundings. Watch song birds, hummingbirds, and critters out a window with a view. Or, have a small backyard barbeque on a warm summer's eve. Hear the crickets and frogs “For the Beauty of the Earth” is a gift from God. Stop! Smell the roses. Life is too short to miss the marvels of Mother Nature. The landscapes will burst into song and the trees will clap their branches!

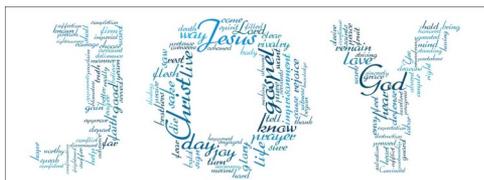
Prayer: *Dear God, Thank you for all your magnificent creations in nature. May we cherish the everlasting beauty and allow peace and joy in our hearts. Amen.*

Linda Seeley married to Mark and resides in Ridgeway. We recently adopted a 4 year old gray tabby from the Human Society named Oodles. We both love nature and the outdoors enjoying fishing, bow hunting and turkey hunting. I teach private piano lessons at my studio in Ridgeway and I substitute teach and perform for senior citizens and private venues on occasion.

**Monday
April 10**

**“This is God, our God forever and ever. He will be our guide.”
Psalm 48:14**

Do not be afraid, God is close beside us guiding and guarding us all the way. Sometimes we are unaware of his presence. We often pray for God's guidance as we struggle with decisions in life. We seek him for directions and to be a constant companion who has knowledge and wisdom during our journey. The Bible is our map and God is our constant companion and guide. We should use both as we make our way through life. True strength comes from quietly trusting in him and his promises. He strengthens us, preparing us for challenges that we will encounter on the road ahead. Trust in him, seek in him, and you will feel joy!



Prayer: *Dear God, teach us to trust in You as our companion and guide as we continue on our journey here on Earth. Teach us to not fear being weak and to know You are always here. Through Your guidance, help us feel safe, secure, and complete. We love You, oh Lord, our strength. We know You are with us wherever we go. Amen.*

Michelle Kleimenhagen married to Ryan for 9 years. We have two girls, Nora (4) and Isla (2). We enjoy camping, biking, and being with our families. I have been teaching 4th grade for 13 years in Barneveld and love it. A lifelong member of BLC – baptized, confirmed, and married here. It's been wonderful being inspired by Pastor Jim to reconnect with God and a place I loved so much while growing up. BLC is truly a great family to have!



Tuesday
April 11

“The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let everyone who hears say, “Come!” And let everyone who is thirsty come; Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.”

Revelation 22:17

I grew up in Denver, Colorado. On my 16th birthday the gift I wanted most was a membership in the Colorado Mountain Club, Junior Division. To gain membership I had to demonstrate that I could rappel. Rappelling is a climbing technique that allows you to do a controlled descent down the side of a mountain using a rope. The senior members of the club positioned the rope properly, stood me at the edge of the drop off place and told me to “just walk backwards and bounce down the side of the mountain”. I knew that if I missed the designated ledge the rope was not long enough to reach the next ledge. I prayed, my prayers were answered and my mission accomplished successfully. Also my faith was even stronger than it was before. My prayer concerns are for those facing challenging decisions, may God be with you and help you.



Prayer: *Dear God, Thank you for the many blessings you have bestowed upon me and for being with me when I face the challenges each day might bring. Amen.*

Tory Kolb is a 92 year old Valentine – yes – born 92 years ago on Valentine’s Day, 1925. It has been so much fun celebrating on this wonderful day every year!



Wednesday
April 12

“Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.”

James 1:22

On July 6th, 2014 we were called on by God to step WAY out of our comfort zone! God asked us to leave our very comfortable and happy lives in Maine and move to Wisconsin to start all over again. This was most definitely God’s plan not ours. We prayed about it and it was very clear that this was what we were supposed to do. So from July to November we sold our home, commercial building, and chiropractic practice in Maine and found our home and business location in Wisconsin. All of these things went fairly smoothly because we were being obedient to His plan...not ours.

When we step out of our comfort zone in obedience amazing things happen. For us, it was the recent amazing addition of our daughter to our family. We believe very strongly that God called on us to move back to Wisconsin so that He could complete our family of four.

When you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit telling you to do something - do you listen and are you obedient? Do you ignore it or brush it off thinking, “I can’t do that?” We encourage you to work toward obedience...you never know the plans that God has for you unless you get out of your comfort zone and do as he asks.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we pray that you will help us to be able to discern when you are talking to us and what you are asking us to do. We pray for clear messages from you and the courage and boldness it takes to be obedient to your word and your will. Amen.*

Janel, Mike, Mary and Otto Voelker



**Maundy
Thursday
April 13**

“Jesus said to his disciples, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.”

Mark 14:34

As Jesus prepared to leave his disciples, I can only imagine the sadness amongst them. But with any end, there is a new beginning. Each Lenten season, I take my journey with Jesus. My personal sacrifices are small attempts to connect with His ultimate sacrifice.

As Easter approaches my eyes become wide and I have a renewed energy in my faith. My eyes open to notice the kindness of others, the joy in one another and the beauty of the world around me. I remain here on earth, doing the work of Christ. Though I am one person, keep awake through sharing kindness, love and finding the good in each person I meet and counting my daily blessings.



Prayer: *Lord, help me see my sadness and hardships as necessary parts of my life. May they strengthen me and provide me with motivation to persevere. May my eyes stay open and look to you. Amen.*

Erin Eslinger is a mother, wife and educator (Principal at Barneveld Schools). My heart is close to nature as I grew up on farm in Cross Plains.



Good
Friday
April 14

“I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.”

Psalm 89:1

I will sing of your steadfast love...those are some pretty powerful words. Love, we all have an inner desire to be loved and to love.

What does the word love really mean? Love is an intense feeling of deep affection towards someone or something. We love each other, we love food, we love music, and we love to have a good time. You see love makes us all feel good when we receive it as well as when we give it. Love is deep and Love is Pure. Just as God is to us deep and pure.

April 14th is my mom's birthday. There is no greater feeling in the world than the love from your mother. When my mother was in the hospital and time was fading, the whole family was there with her. I will always and forever remember my mom's last words. Johnny and I were in her room and we were knelt by her bedside. Mom was looking up at the ceiling and said “I'm coming.” Johnny replied to mom saying “Is Dad waiting?” mom said “yes”. Johnny told her “Go mom and be with Dad” and within a few minutes she was gone to be with her true love. In I Corinthians tells us “Love is Patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes always preserves. Love never fails.”

Prayer: *Dear God, Thank you for loving us unconditionally. Give us the strength to love one another unconditionally. Amen.*

Lea Bahr I have 3 daughters who I love very much. They were all confirmed in the Hollandale Lutheran Church. When they were young I taught them all Sunday School until they were confirmed.



Holy
Saturday
April 15

“O LORD, let your ear be attentive to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night.”

Nehemiah 1:6

We've walked together through the long penitential season of Lent, reflecting on our own human condition and on Jesus' journey to the cross. This last week we have watched his arrest, trial, beating, crucifixion, abandonment and death. Today we wait together through the dark and silence of Holy Saturday, when all the earth seems to take a breather and rest for a while.

For those first disciples, for the women who saw where Jesus' body was laid, it was the Sabbath. A day of rest where nothing more could be done. A day of necessary dormancy.

Jesus was dead. His body rested in the cool comfort of the tomb. His earthly journey had ended. His work was accomplished and he lay still and quiet. It was finished.

We who live on this side of the resurrection know that this isn't the end of the story. We know that tomorrow morning there will be light and flowers and music and celebration and shouts of Alleluia. But before tomorrow comes, it is good to rest in the quiet of the Sabbath. Trusting in the presence of God in the darkness and waiting patiently for that spark of the Spirit that holds the promise of something new. That new life will come, but today it is good to wait in the silence with the disciples, with those women, with Jesus.

Prayer: *Good and gracious God, be with us in our times of darkness. Help us to trust in your presence and purpose even when we can't see it. Help us to wait patiently through times of necessary dormancy for the coming dawn of new light and life. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Amen.*

Rev. Mary Froiland currently serves as Bishop of the South Central Synod of the ELCA. She and her husband, Rev. John Froiland, live in Edgerton. Mary and John have shared life and ministry together for 37 years and continue to find joy and fulfillment in both!



Easter
Sunday
April 16

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? Jesus is not here, but has risen”

Luke 24:5

THE WORK OF ANGELS

Several women who had been traveling with the followers of Jesus from Galilee returned to the tomb in which Jesus' body had been placed and were surprised to find that the stone had been rolled away and the body removed. Two angels standing nearby asked the women why they were looking for the body in the tomb since Jesus had many times before told his followers that he was the Son of God and must die before rising up again to enter into heaven. The women were likely embarrassed and also frightened because they had forgotten what Jesus had told them about the extreme sacrifice he was prepared to make and that God had to send angels to remind them.

This scripture made us wonder when God's angels may have entered into our lives without us recognizing it at the time. We have been so blessed by God over the years it is very likely that we have encountered angels many times along the way. Many of us and our families have likely been the subjects of divine interventions (through the work of God's angels) to recover from injuries, illness or other crisis. Following our recovery, it is likely that each of us said “Thank you God” in our own way. However, we should never forget the feeling of thankfulness that was felt immediately following crisis situations and we should continue to honor Jesus' sacrifice for us and to frequently express our thanks to God and his angels in our prayers.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, Thank you for sending angels to take care of us in times of need. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.*

Judy and Rick Anderson - Married for 46+ years, so it is fitting that we do this together. In retirement, work and other activities are basically the same thing which for us is mostly farming and exercise.

