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[Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey](#)

[Zion Lutheran Church ELCA](#)

Zoom log in information and the worship bulletin for each week can be found on our website on the “Worship in the Pandemic” page

Helpers for August

Lectors—Arline Hornung/Charlie and Diane Rine

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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The Coming Year

Usually, my August newsletter is filled with ideas and plans for the coming program year...Sunday school, confirmation plans, adult education plans, plans for service projects and giving. If I have new ideas for worship, August’s letter would talk about that.

This year, I don’t really know what any of that will look like. I’ve got my thoughts on reopening on the next page, but here I just want to say, I’m tired of all the uncertainty about things. I’m guessing you are, too. Our lives have been so disrupted by all that’s gone on this year, and it doesn’t seem like it will end anytime soon. We humans like stability. Change is hard for most of us, and many of us like to be able to control things at least a little more than we have over the last several months. Honestly, I think some of the anger and divisiveness has come from a desperate desire to not feel out of control.

But here’s what I’ve come to believe about God. I think God loves disruption. Now, don’t get me wrong, I don’t think God causes all the stuff that is happening. As I’ve repeatedly said, God has allowed free will and self-determination in our day to day lives. God has allowed creation to be what it’s going to be. Disruption is a side-effect of the kind of freedom God has given us.

What God does do is use that disruption to change us...to transform us. And God does that not just for our sake, but also to further the mission to which God has called us.

I experienced this in the last couple years of my medical career. I was burned out, depressed, and anxious about the future. God jumped into that disruption and struck me with this seminary idea. That created even more disruption. But it’s also where I’ve most powerfully experienced God at work in my life, and really in the life of the church and the world. Whenever God calls us to something, it’s not just for our sake—it’s for the sake of the church and the church’s mission to a hurting world.

I think that’s where we are now. There is disruption the likes of which most of us have never seen. Nothing seems normal anymore and we wonder whether it will ever be. I’m going to hazard a guess...if being normal means just like it used to be, the answer is probably no. But if the question is, can the world and the lives of people be better than the old normal, the hope in me says yes. See I believe God is working in the midst of the current disruption. God is asking us to pray, to listen, and to trust that God is leading us to work for the good of all creation. In the church, those changes will be hard for some. I liked a lot about the old way of doing everything. But it wasn’t always the best way for the church’s mission to share Christ’s love with the world and all the world’s people.

When I was walking the path from an old calling to a new one, I couldn’t see the end. I can’t see the end now of what the church is being called to. But because God called me to something more life giving than before, I can trust that God is doing that for the church...for us...now. (cont. pg. 2)

My Thoughts on Re-opening

Most of you know we gathered in person for worship once, on July 5. Even then case numbers in Lancaster County had started going up and have now reached new highs. The most recent positive tests have been mostly among young people who generally, thought not always, fare well with Covid 19. But the presence of that much virus in the community increases the likelihood of more vulnerable people also being infected. As a result, the Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department has raised their risk estimation into the high risk orange zone. Time will tell whether more recent prevention efforts will pay off and flatten that rise.

The one in person worship service we had went OK, although the internet did not work at Zion. Council there is working with AIS to get that issue solved. Nobody came to worship at either church that wasn't already doing Zoom, and at least a couple households said Zoom actually felt more like church than in person, because of all the precautions we felt were necessary to protect one another.

As before, we will want to see a steady decrease in new cases, and a movement on the Lancaster County risk dial to at least back in the yellow moderate risk Zone. I think it also remains to be seen what effect schools reopening will have, so I want to see how that goes before we commit to trying in person worship again. I don't anticipate in person worship again until at least September, and that will depend on so many things.

However, we did have a lovely outdoor communion service at Bethlehem on July 19 and we will plan to do the same at Zion on August 2. We will continue offering an outdoor communion service on the first Sunday of the month at Zion and the third Sunday of the month at Bethlehem. This allows a chance to gather with those we haven't seen, and a chance to receive communion in a way that I thought felt more truly sacramental than what we did when we gathered in the sanctuary. We will continue that schedule until we can again gather inside or the weather turns bad.

I know some of you spend most of your time in areas that do not have the high case numbers and may think this is overkill, but there are a sizeable number of us who are in those places, including me. That's the reason for using Lancaster County data rather than say Saunders County.

I also know this all has been politicized in a way that my more science-oriented brain finds mind-boggling. We've had almost no pushback in either congregation on any of the measures we've taken, but if you have questions or disagree with what we are doing, I hope you will call me and talk about it and don't just let the irritation linger. For that matter, feel free to call and talk about anything else on your mind, especially if you have concerns or disagree with something. I want us to all get through this safely physically, but also to find new ways for us to grow spiritually and maybe even as a community. Honest conversation is the best way to that kind of community.

Christ's peace,

Pastor Kris

Calendar

- August 2** 10:00 am—Zoom Worship
11:30 am Outdoor communion service at Zion . Details and instructions on insert
- August 9** 10:00 am—Zoom Worship
4 to about 6 pm—Sunday school/confirmation family gathering for families of children pre-K through Middle School, at Otto's pond—details and map on insert
- August 16** 10:00 am—Zoom Worship
11:30 am—Outdoor communion at Bethlehem
Zion BBQ—take out or delivery only, presales only. Details on insert
- August 23** 10:00 am Zoom worship
- August 30** 10:00 am Zoom worship

Wednesday evenings at 6:30 on Facebook Live, I offer a little midweek meditation exploring what God might be up to in the midst of all that's happening in our lives. Join me or watch the video later. I try to remember to make them public so folks not on Facebook can view them.

Church offerings can continue to be mailed to:

Mike Unverferth	or	Aaron Nygren
2800 W. Branched Oak Rd.		927 County Rd. 17
Raymond, NE 68428		Wahoo, NE 68066

Both churches also have an online giving option through tithe.ly. The easiest option is to download the tithe.ly app on a mobile device. Then just search for either church. You can also give from a laptop or PC – go to this link and instead of downloading app, click on “give online.”

<https://get.tithe.ly/download-tithely-app>



Here is the log in information for worship which will be **at 10:00 am for the foreseeable future**

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81665346843?pwd=dkhXWG54REh4QnA3Um5mQ05GOUJQT09>

Phone—1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 816 6534 6843

Passcode: 787545

Zion-Bethlehem Sunday School/Confirmation Kick-Off

Who For all families at Bethlehem and Zion with kids from pre-K through middle school

Date: Sunday August 9

Time: 4:00 pm to about 6:00 pm

Where: Otto's pond just north of County Rd A on County Rd. 14, outside of Ceresco. Here's the map:



The kids will have a chance to reconnect. There will be a fun learning activity—the Bible Ninja Warriors. We'll eat, and then Sunday school families, teachers and leaders will talk about how to go about Sunday school this fall.

Pastor Kris will meet with parents of middle school kids to talk about confirmation and how we will structure the next few years for that

What to bring: A picnic supper and utensils for your household; fishing gear if your child wants to fish; for middle school families, if possible a calendar, or at least some sense of what sports and school activities kids plan to be involved in and what that might look like schedule-wise.

Zion BBQ

The Pork Barbecue is **August 19 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.**

It will be **limited to carry out at 5 sites.** Pick up will be at Zion, Ceresco Park, Alma Lutheran in Mead, Bethlehem Lutheran in Wahoo, and Bethlehem Lutheran in Davey.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids. Tickets need to be purchased in advance. Please talk to Pastor Kris or a Zion member if you would like to buy tickets. Online purchases will also be available, but is not yet set up.

Outdoor Communion Instructions—Bethlehem and Zion

- A table with prefilled cups and napkins with wafers will be set up outside—location depends a bit on wind.
- I would prefer people wear masks, but outdoor events are safer and if you are unable or choose not to wear a mask, you are still welcome
- If you do not wear a mask, please remain in your vehicle until others are situated
- If you are wearing a mask, you can gather on the sidewalk, the lawn at Bethlehem or Zion, or parking lot at Zion, depending on where table is located. I will situate unmasked folks after everyone else is in place
- We will commune one household at a time
- Only I will touch the elements and I won't physically place anything in anyone's hands—you'll pick up your own cup and wafer as the words are spoken
- The service will be short—about 10-15 minutes max. If you need to sit, you can bring your own chair, or we can bring chairs up from downstairs