



Encounter Christ Grow in faith Love as Christ loved Tell the Story

Ministry Calling

In March the Bethlehem council held a council retreat to take a look at where we are as a congregation. Our conversation was formed around the ministry surveys I had people fill out, a values exercise, and a look at strengths and weaknesses.

The ministry of the church has two arms – the ministry that you do in your everyday lives and the ministry we do as a congregation in our community. The goal of the retreat was kind of a check up to see how we are doing, and to create a space to generate some ideas.

The ministry surveys indicated to me that you all have a pretty good understanding of what it means to be ministers in your daily life. The surveys indicated that the most important ways the church helps you in that ministry is by giving a weekly chance to recharge, renew and just be; providing a supportive, non-judgmental and caring community; teaching and encouraging love of neighbor; and working together in shared service.

We also talked about strengths and weaknesses of our congregation and did a values exercise to determine our top four values. The top four values were serving, community, cooperation, and family. Those also came up in a discussion of strengths and weaknesses. They also fit quite nicely with the ways those who filled out ministry surveys thought the church helped them in their ministry.

In short, we seem to be living out pretty well what's of value to us.

Another strength we discussed was our financial well-being. That is a true gift because not all congregations can say that.

Our weakness? We probably didn't need a council retreat to answer that one – numbers of active participants.

We are very vibrant and have a sizeable number in the age group upon whom churches most depend – people in the stage of life where they have more discretionary time and income. We have lively worship and do good work. But the declining numbers will begin to have an impact at some point.

I'm not sure there is an obvious solution to that. Church numbers are declining across the board – we have actually held on better than most.

What we can do is do our best to respond to God's call to be the church for each other and for our neighbors.

On the next page are some thoughts/ideas for the coming year or two that arose from our conversation.

April Helpers

Lector—Judy Hornung
Communion Assistant—Marilyn Kahler
Ushers—Giebenrath
Cleaners—Wk 1/2—Rhonda Madsen
Wk 3/4—Randy Giebenrath
Altar—Mary O'Hare, Marilyn Kahler



Pastor Kris—402-499-4993
krisbo90@gmail.com
Church Website—bethlehemdavey.org



If you have ideas or items for the newsletter, please let me know. I'd be glad to put in things of importance to you and your family, to our congregation and in the community around us. I'm also happy to put in soup recipes!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
PO Box 96
Davey, NE 68336

Community engagement. One thing I want to do is a purge of stuff at church we no longer use and hold a garage sale. We'd offer coffee and cookies or something and just ask people to pay what they want. The idea would be to donate the money to something – preferably in the community, but it's also a way to engage with the community around us.

Another suggestion for community engagement was to do something with the folks at St. Mary's. I have a couple of ideas for that

Serving together as a congregation is clearly a vital part of what we do so we will continue that. We have several things we do already and a list of others to try

Electronic outreach, both for members and non-members. We have a website and Facebook page. I'm slowly learning Twitter and Instagram. I would like to put the Sunday sermon on Facebook live. But I was struck by the number surveys at both churches that indicated one of the top three places time is spent is vehicles. Not too surprising given our rural location. So I'm wondering about a podcast.

Health related issues – Curtis has been doing some research into parish nursing and thinking about some ways we might offer some sort of health ministry in the church or community or cluster. We'll have more conversations in the near future.

Inviting people – we can be the best, most caring, supportive, and service-minded community in the world, who regularly sense God's work among us. But if we keep it secret, growth won't happen. I would like to challenge everyone to invite one person to join us for worship or some other activity in the coming year

Faith Formation—we are moving into a new era in this. With just two pre-confirmation age children, and an All-Congregation Sunday School concept that has faltered this year, we won't have Sunday school next year. I have been in conversation with Amanda and others and we've discussed different options for Makenna and Walker. There will continue to be opportunities for them to learn and grow in faith, and we will continue to have periodic cross-generational learning or serving events

We'll have 5 middle school and high school boys. Our youth group met in February for supper, some activities and planning. We came up with some ideas of things they want to do. I will plan to meet with the kids and families later this spring.

With no confirmation and no Sunday school for me to think about next year, I'd like to focus a bit more on adult faith formation. We talked about some different options at the council retreat, and I plan to have conversations with others.

Again, I want to stress that we are a healthy congregation. Good work is done here to build up our faith, strengthen our community, and also to train us and energize us for the task of discipleship. We will continue to answer the call to be God's church in the world.

In Christ's peace,

Pastor Kris

February Calendar

April 2	9:00 am quilting
April 3	6:00 pm—Lent Midweek, Zion
April 7	9:15 am—All Congregation Sunday school 10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion
April 8	6:30 pm—Women's group at Virg's
April 10	6:00 pm—Lent midweek, Bethlehem— bring an item from a trip you've taken
April 14	10:30 am—Palm Sunday
April 18	6:30 pm—Maundy Thursday
April 19	6:30 pm—Good Friday
April 21	8:00 am—Easter worship, breakfast to follow
April 28	10:30 am—Worship

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday—April 14

Maundy Thursday—April 18—worship at 6:30 pm

Good Friday—April 19—worship at 6:30 pm

Easter—April 21—Worship at 8:00 am, Easter Breakfast at 9:00 am

Flood Relief

The Nebraska Synod website has a flood page with lots of links for people who need help and people who want to help. If you're interested in volunteering, you can check there, or Pr. Kris is tentatively planning to go volunteer, possibly at Fremont, on the 27th of April. If you're interested in joining, talk to Pr. Kris. Mostly it appears there are warehouse, distribution and administrative positions posted, but also some clean up type jobs as well for people over 18.

