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Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey

Council president—Jeff Atkinson—402-432-6212
Council members—Mike Unverferth, Judy Hornung,
Jerri Daugherty, Curtis Olson, Gabe Allen

February Helpers

Lector and Communion Assistant slots for all of 2022 are open. Let me know if you have a month you would like to take one of the jobs

Clean—Weeks 1/2 Jeff and Laurie Atkinson
Weeks 2/3 Charlie and Karen Brown
Usher—Randy Giebenrath
Altar—Rhonda Madsen

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Bethlehem Star



February 2022

Life as an Ordinary Monk

Christian monastic communities have existed for centuries. In the 3rd and 4th century, men and women who became known as the desert fathers and mothers (abbas and ammas) left the cities and villages of the Roman Empire and moved to the desert in northern Africa. After the conversion of the Empire to Christianity, they believed Christian faith had become weak and tainted by the comforts and power of empire.

Many lived as hermits, but they still formed loose communities which eventually became the framework for the monastic communities...the abbeys, monasteries and convents as we know them now. What the communities are called and the exact shape of their organization varies from order to order. But celibacy, living in a community separated from the secular world, and a rule of life that structures their daily lives are typical characteristics. They also typically have a particular calling to a certain kind of work or action.

The Celtic world also developed monastic communities centered in their own spirituality. However, they were much less focused on a particular building. In a sense, they experienced the natural world as a sort of monastery and saw all lives as sacred, not just those called to live in such communities. Celibacy was also less of a thing. But many still have a community and a rule of life that structures their days.

Over the last several decades, a new movement has taken root in the world of monasticism. It's often called the New Monasticism. It has features more like that of Celtic monasticism, but really is its own thing. It basically involves living a more contemplative and simple life in the ordinary world of work, family, and community.

Some new monastics live in communal settings. Others live in traditional and non-traditional families. Other monastic communities are scattered throughout the world and connect online. The Northumbria Community of Scotland is one. The Iona Community, also of Scotland, has an abbey on the island of Iona, but they have associates throughout the world.

I find myself being drawn to many of the aspects of monasticism, particularly the new monasticism and the ones steeped in Celtic spirituality. The rhythm of life associated with monasticism seems very grounding to me, especially in the midst of the craziness of life. And Celtic spirituality's appreciation of God's presence in the natural world and in other people seems to me to be a way forward from lots of what's wrong now.

I likely will never become a formal part of any monastic community. But I am drawn to the practices and the rhythm. The other day I watched a video from the Northumbria community. The presenter lifted up the basic daily practices for monastics, including those trying to live in a more centered way in their everyday lives.

They're listed below with some ideas for observing them when you're not a formal part of a monastic community.

Worship – monastic communities, whether living under one roof or not, follow some sort of daily communal worship/prayer. I've incorporated the Iona Community's interactive daily morning prayer service into my routine – you can find it at this link: [Iona Morning Prayer](#). If you just google that, you'll also find it. There are a variety of books and websites that offer written versions of morning prayer. Our own hymnal has a morning prayer service. Or you can make up your own thing with a little music, prayers for yourself, and prayers for others.

Work – most of us have jobs or houses to take care of. Sometimes our work is a form of prayer. And work which uses the hands – creative work or manual work such as garden or housework – can often be very grounding. Whatever work you do, practice mindfulness. Focus on each task and imagine how it serves God or God's world.

Inner work – This is the contemplative work. Centering prayer, breath prayer, meditation, journaling, lectio divina, etc. Most monastics and lots of other people also have a spiritual director – someone to whom you can open up and wrestle with your own demons and discern what the Spirit is up to in your life. I've met with a spiritual director monthly for over 20 years.

Study – Bible study, other faith or spiritual reading, study groups with others. This also includes study of nature, study of a particular issue that seems to particularly grab you, or just learning something new about the world.

Solitude – We live in a noisy, overconnected world. Taking some time to be alone, especially in nature, can be tremendously healing and refreshing.

Community – But community is also important. Conversations with the people you live with, calling up a friend, attending worship or other events at church, or participating in community activities are all options.

Lent is coming soon. I'm working on the plan now that I think will include some fun and interesting ways to be just a little bit monk-ish in our own world.

Christ's peace,

Pastor Kris

Brief recap of Annual Meeting actions:

2021 Finances—Income \$56,120 and expenses \$44,522. Some of that income is investment income so not realized until actually taken out.

Budget passed—3% raise for Pastor Kris but the Zion/Bethlehem split has changed to 47.5%/52.5% reflecting the change in Pastor's time. Total expenses budgeted for 2022: \$48,225

Voted to contribute \$5000 to Davey Park Improvement fund.

Judy Hornung goes off council this year—Linda Sestak elected.

Next step in discernment of accessibility remodel is to assess community needs.

Calendar

For at least the next couple of weeks, we will continue to offer a Zoom option for worship. Worship is also available on YouTube Live. Check the worship page on our website for the links:

<http://bethlehemdavey.org/>

February

February 6 10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion.

February 13 10:30am—Worship
Souper Bowl—I'm hoping we can do our soup lunch. It appears Covid numbers are starting to decrease. That will be the main determinant. Regardless, we will collect money for Matt Talbot.

February 20 10:30 am—Worship , Holy Communion
Souper Bowl—Postponed from the 13th..

February 27 10:30 am—Worship

Looking Ahead—Lent

Lent is just around the corner. Ash Wednesday is March 2. Worship with Imposition of Ashes will be at 6:30 pm at Zion and 8:00 pm at Bethlehem.

If Covid comes down and stays down, we will plan our first normal Lent Midweek services since Lent 2019! We will start at Zion on March 9 and alternate from there. I'm working on the plans for this and I'm excited about it! There will be more info to come.