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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

October Helpers

Lector—Mike

Cleaners—Weeks 1/2—Amanda and
Makenna H.

Weeks 3/4—Larry and LaDonna

Ushers—Curtis and Carlos

Altar—Marilyn

Communion Assistant—Marilyn

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
PO Box 96
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Bethlehem Star



October 2021

St. Francis

Monday was the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis was born to a wealthy Italian father and French mother. In his early years he lived a carefree, exuberant life. He spent money lavishly, enjoyed fancy clothes, and loved partying with friends. But early on, he became disillusioned with his rich lifestyle and took a vow of poverty.

To this day, the Franciscan order is a committed religious community who commits to a simple lifestyle and rejection of personal wealth...in theory anyway.

But what Francis is most associated with is his love for animals and the natural environment. St. Francis viewed the natural world as a sacramental world. Father Richard Rohr, himself a Franciscan, makes this point in his daily reflections this week.

It got me to thinking about sacraments. In the Lutheran church, formally only baptism and communion are sacraments. The formal definition for a sacrament is that it's instituted by Christ and it is the presence of Christ in physical elements. The sacraments not only unite us with Christ, but they unite us with one another.

It is in this latter sense that one might think of nature as sacramental...it means that all of creation reflects the presence of God within it. To say creation is sacramental is to believe that we are not only united with God and one another, but we are spiritually united with all of creation.

I find this more and more compelling all the time. Francis' relationship to the natural world can be seen in his "Canticle to Brother Sun and Sister Moon." The hymn "All Creatures of our God and King" is based on it.

The version of the hymn in the red ELW hymnal we use now is different than in the old green hymnal. Now it's called instead "All Creatures Worship God Most High." I think the change reflects in a small part the ELW's work to remove masculine references to God, but this title also more accurately reflects Francis' canticle.

But what I really like is all the references in the ELW version to brothers and sisters...in the old version, only Mother earth got any kind of familial reference. In the ELW version, we have not only brother sun and sister moon, but brother wind, sister water, brother fire, and of course Mother Earth – Dear Mother Earth so rich in care, praise God in colors bright and rare. Even gentle sister death gets a verse.

These familial titles come straight out of St. Francis' Canticle – the ELW version is far more faithful to his original words than "All Creatures of Our God and King."

Francis truly felt that sort of kinship to the natural world. The natural world for him was the real presence of God in the world...that God is somehow...in a way mysterious and profound...in all creation.

That's what a sacramental view of creation is.

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More and more, scholars over the last century have worked with this idea, especially those who work at the intersection of science and theology.

How would it impact our treatment of creation if we viewed all its pieces as our brothers and sisters? How would we experience the outdoors on a walk or fishing trip or camping trip if we believed everything we encountered contained the presence of God?

The next time you are outdoors, look around. Find something to focus on...a leaf...a bug...your dog or cat...a flower. How does it change the way you see it to imagine the presence of God within it?

Christ' peace,

Pastor Kris

Opportunities to Serve

Afghan Refugee Resettlement

We are going to “Build a Basket” for the Afghan refugee resettlement project. I’ll get 4 clothes baskets and we’ll fill them with household cleaning, laundry, and personal hygiene products. We will collect items the next three Sundays – October 10, 17 and 24. You can also give financially – check their website for more info: lfsneb.org



Little Free Pantry

Our little free pantry and our community produce table have been well used this summer. We’ve taken down the produce table for the season. We’ve learned some things about how to do that better next year.

We have run low on items for the little free pantry—especially needed now are cleaning and personal hygiene items, soups, and canned meats. We have plenty of pasta and canned vegetables. If you buy laundry or dish soap, the pods are nice because we can separate them into baggies.

While we will continue with grocery cards, we are likely going to change to a by request only system. Council will talk about it Sunday.

Calendar

Worship is also available on YouTube Live. Check the worship page on our website for the links to YouTube and to the bulletin: <http://bethlehemdavey.org/>

October

- October 3** 10:30 am—worship with Holy Communion.
- October 10** 10:30am—Worship
5:00 pm—Council
- October 17** 10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion
- October 24** 10:30 am—Worship
- October 31** 10:30 am—Reformation Worship with Holy Communion
Reformation potluck after worship

All Saints Sunday

All Saints Sunday is Sunday November 7. On that day we remember those from our congregation who have died. This year that will be Elaine Hansen. You will all be invited to light a candle in memory of someone you have loved and lost.

Thank you!

Thank you again to everyone who participated in the 10th Ordination Anniversary celebration! It was a beautiful day and a great time and place to celebrate our years of ministry together.

Freed for Life

The Freed for Life Banquet is Sunday November 7. This banquet is one of the biggest fundraisers of the year for the Nebraska Synod’s prison ministries. These ministries bring the gospel of Christ’s love to incarcerated people. They also prepare and equip incarcerated and newly released people to successfully transition to community living. I plan to buy a table—let me know if you would like to attend. There’s no cost to you, unless you would like to “pay it forward” through a donation at the event.