

GRAPEVINE NEWSLETTER

November 2020

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Pastor's Ponderings--Reflecting Upon Generosity

Dear BSLC Community of Faith,

My family fit the stereotyped understanding of what people “just do not talk about.” I grew up in a family that didn’t talk much about money. When we had to fill out a form for school that had our family income amount on it, my father spoke in a hushed tone to say to not open and show it to anyone, that it might make people uncomfortable to know we had more money than them—which rather surprised me because heard many times “we can’t afford that” and so thought we didn’t have much money. (In fact, I believed in Santa Claus later than most just because I “knew” that my parents couldn’t afford the presents we all received at Christmas.)

Into this mix I somehow did pick up that giving to church was important—it was something we “just did” my mother told me a few years ago. I was first made to give money that my parents gave to me to place straight into an offering plate or more enjoyably, into a little church bank or small envelopes (oh now I loved how grown up *those* made me feel!). Later I designated my 10% if I made more than the minimum expected offering we children were to make. So it was that I learned the practice of giving each week, but I didn’t learn why we give, beyond duty. Fortunately, I have had a number of generosity and stewardship mentors along the way—and some people who prompted me to grow even in spite of themselves.

You will no doubt hear other stories over the years, of how I have come to understand stewardship and generosity with much richer nuance, but let me tell you how I came to enjoy stewardship in a more lighthearted way during my first call. The generous woman who let me stay in her basement apartment while we waited for our house to be finished and my family to arrive, let me know almost right away that I was not to speak of money and stewardship but one Sunday a year. If she heard about either more than that, she would get up and walk out of worship! I must say that was disconcerting for a newbie pastor to hear! And with so much of scripture naturally related to stewardship of something God entrusts to us, it wasn’t so easy to avoid the word—however I became pretty adept at using euphemisms.

It must have been a couple of years in, maybe three, when I happened to read the book *Giving to God* by Mark Allen Powell—I think a group studied it here, too, because there were copies in the office when I arrived. I loved how that book opened me up to a new understanding of stewardship as an essential faith practice (you will note my copy is well worn and marked up!). The author even had me chuckling about stewardship, and a playfulness started to mark my increasing references to stewardship, the previously taboo subject of money, and generosity as a practice of a fulfilled life.

These topics came to be things I was so passionate about, that they were foundational to the work I did on behalf of churchwide and in my synod role. Who would have known back in those early days of my first call, that I'd have to remind myself that some folks have to be eased into talk about financial stewardship especially, because conversations about money are often more foundational to our faith than we'd ever imagine?! (I'll save more on that topic for another time)

So while our stewardship committee's "Grow Our Culture of Generosity" initiative is meant to ground our family units' discernment around the level of generosity God is inviting us into this year, but it's also a time to celebrate the joys of generosity, and reflect upon those generous people who have shaped our own experience of generosity. As you reflect, please be generous in sharing your stories of generosity through email to use in our newsletter or eblasts, or brief recordings of generosity stories as we have been experiencing during worship this fall as part of our offering. Who says that generosity should only be mentioned during one season a year?

Oh yes—and about that season we are in—next week you will receive a hard copy of a statement of intent for your 2021 commitment of giving, and direction for submitting the form online as a google doc. Please start conversation in your household and between yourselves and God in prayer, as you determine what level of generosity you are being prompted into. Although giving to a budget can inhibit the potential impact of generosity (for healthy living we are generous because we are created to be so), the combined generosity of the congregation will have influence upon the steps we take forward into the growing mission and ministry we anticipate God is drawing us into as a congregation. Thanks be to God!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jean

P.S. With Gratitude As my mother has been dying in these recent days, I have felt the prayers and care of so many of you. Thank you for those prayers and other ways you have provided support, including understanding my felt need to actively accompany her, especially in light of her advanced dementia. This time has been a gift, and in some ways healing. While the ache of her loss will linger, I expect getting back to the rhythms of ministry and liturgy will bring further comfort. I definitely will have a deeper and fuller understanding of others' experiences with hospice and close accompaniment of loved ones through death's transition.



Annual Congregational Meeting - November 15, 1 PM

Because of continuing gathering restrictions, we will be meeting via ZOOM to conduct our Annual Meeting. A link will be sent to you via the e-Blast next week along with instructions on how to log on. *If you're not familiar with ZOOM, we are ready to help you navigate. Don't hesitate to ask for guidance.*

In the meantime, make sure you have ZOOM downloaded onto your computer; that you have audio and that you have video capability (not entirely necessary, but helpful). If you need help, **ASK!** You'll also be given information on how to log into the meeting via your telephone. Watch for more detailed information soon! **Please SET ASIDE THE DATE OF NOVEMBER 15 @ 1 PM.** As a member of BSLC, *we strongly encourage you to participate* and help to make decisions for 2021, our '21 budget, and voting in new council members.

From Kirsten, Our Director of Youth and Family Ministry

As part of the educational preparation for baptismal affirmation, our confirmands had to study many things about the Bible, Lutheran theology, and Christian living. A piece of this process at our church is composing a faith statement that reflects what they believe at this point in their lives. We all know that how we articulate our faith will change throughout our lives, and our three confirmands agreed to share their statements with the whole congregation. I encourage you to reach out to each student (send a card or give them a call) to celebrate this milestone they've

Our 2020 Confirmands



Angelo

Griffin

Patrick

marked in their faith journey.

Their faith statements begin with the prompt, "Being a follower (disciple) of Jesus means that..."

Griffin:

"I believe Jesus impacted my life by showing my path and the way to my future. Faith is important to me because if you don't have

faith, it means you don't trust yourself or trust another person. I changed through my faith by showing love and trust in others. I am Christian because I trust God and trust myself.

The relationships I have reflect my faith, because it's like trying to respect my family and all around me. The way I spend my time shows my faith, by caring for my family and caring for those who need help. Confirmation is speaking the truth about my faith and how I plan to live my spiritual life."

Patrick:

"God and the Lord bless us and they forgive us for our sins and mistakes. I believe God to be a being that created us and created our home. I believe that God is our first ancestor that started the whole family tree for us. I think that he is active in our world as he guides us and forgives our sins.

I've seen God working for our life as He is fixing mistakes we made and how He has helped us through hard times. To me, being confirmed means to be accepted by God, to become one of his true kids, or to be seen by God. I can see myself serving Jesus Christ by not fearing death like he did and help everyone out and forgive for everyone's sins. I would like to thank my parents for showing me to the way to Christ as well as all of my pastors. I would like to thank everyone else for accepting me at this church and confirming me."

Angelo:

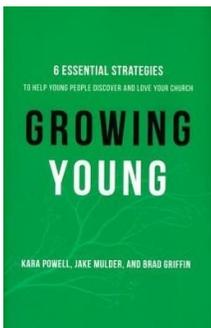
"I like being a part of Jesus and being a part of the church in the world. I want to be a part of the congregation. I feel like being confirmed is the right step, the right direction in going forward in being a part of the congregation.

What does it mean to be confirmed? For me, it is a privilege to be accepted in to the faith of God and the faith of the church, and also being a part of something bigger than just this church.

God resides in me, and in everyone: the young, and the old, and no matter what you believe in. Sometimes when I'm out in my neighborhood riding my bike with friends, we see homeless people asking for help. I have given them money sometimes so they can hopefully buy food. I feel like God calls me to do that, and I hope it will help them do what is right.

I like being accepted, it makes me feel good inside, and it helps me do right the things. I'm really excited to be a part of the congregation. Ever since my mom and I started coming to the church, we felt really welcome. It may have been awkward at the beginning since we didn't know anybody, but now that we've been here for a couple years, I feel like I have a good relationship with the people here and a good relationship with God."

Survey results - thank you for participating in the fall survey! We had 34 individual responses, and your comments and ideas have helped us as a staff and task force plan for Advent and Christmas. Most people have been participating in our online worship service on Facebook, and a third of people watch on YouTube. Around 14 percent of people are not participating in online worship at all, and commented that it is difficult to connect to a worshipful experience through the internet.



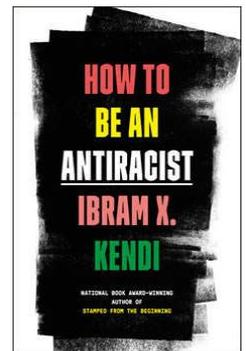
BOOK STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Growing Young

A leadership book study on 3rd Thursdays at 6:30 pm on Zoom. All are welcome to join the discussion at any time. Request a zoom link at youthdirector@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com

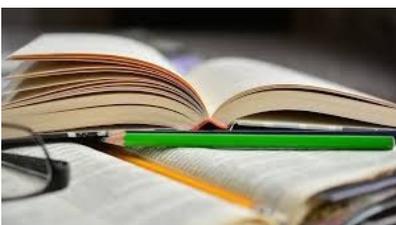
How to be an AntiRacist Sundays 3:00-4:30 p.m. via Zoom

Let Pastor Jean know if you are interested in joining the conversation, so that she may send you the zoom link. pastorjean@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com
Note: we divide into small conversation groups after a very brief prayer and check in, reconvening about 4:15 or 4:20 to share small group highlights.



Bible Studies through BSLC

Wednesday Bible Study with Pastor Jean meets via Zoom at **10:30 AM**. Through the end of the year they discuss the text assigned for the upcoming Sunday. In January they will delve into a study of Genesis. For the Zoom link email Pastor Jean at the email address above.



Thursday Gather Bible Study meets on Zoom at 10:00 AM. For more information contact Nancy K. (her contact information is available through the church office).

Bible Sunday - November 29 during worship online!

One of the promises we make during baptism as a church is to support our children and families, including responsibility for placing in their hands the holy scriptures. It has been a few years since BSLC has given Bibles to our children, so we have some catching up to do! All children and students in 3rd grade to 8th grade will receive a NRSV Bible, and families with children 2nd grade and younger will also receive a Spark Story Bible. Kirsten will be contacting families to arrange drop-off, and we will bless the children during worship on November 29.



WHAT: Red Cross Blood Drive

WHEN: Friday, December 4th, 1 - 6:30 PM

WHERE: Beautiful Savior Fellowship Hall

WHO: All those able to give blood.

WHY: The need is greater than ever!

Between Covid-19 and a record number of natural disasters, and many donation sites closed due to Covid, we really need a big turnout! Our goal is 32 Units of whole blood -- exceeding our previous average of 24 to 26 Units!

Contact Sue Nolan (contact information available from bslc@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com or sign up directly at www.redcrossblood.org and search by date/location.

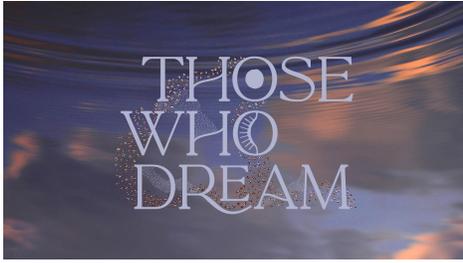
Thanksgiving Eve Worship and Pie!

Thanksgiving Eve (November 25) worship - 6 pm on YouTube and Facebook. **Virtual Pie Potluck** - 7 pm (Zoom link will be sent out via e-blast, or email Kirsten to request the link youthdirector@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com)



Gratitude stories for Thanksgiving!

For the Thanksgiving Eve worship service on November 25, we would like to include video clips of people saying one or two things they are grateful for. **Get your whole family involved!** Keep your video short, 10-20 seconds, so we can involve lots of people. Submit your clips as an email attachment to Kirsten -- youthdirector@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com by November 23.



Looking ahead to ADVENT 2020!

This year's season of Advent begins the last Sunday in November, the 29th. Like everything else of 2020, this year's observances are going to "look different". We are actually going to expand opportunities for preparing our hearts and minds for both the Christmas season and the new year.

Our theme, "*Those Who Dream*", is for the dreamer in all of us--but most especially those who dream of a deeper connection with God or dream of a better world. It's also for those who dream of comfort *and* for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time.

Join the worship leaders this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God's dreams for our world.

Advent Activity Connecting Home and Community: Households are invited to participate in making banners for both their home and our sanctuary. More to come later in November!

Advent Evening Worship - grounded in Holden Evening Prayer. Published at 5 PM on Sundays on Facebook and YouTube.

Advent At-Home Kit - Celebrate Advent at home, 2020 style! Take-home kits for all ages will include a daily devotional booklet and prayer activities. Available for pickup at BSLC building November 22. Call before arriving, to ensure access, unless you have a key.

Mid-week Advent Devotions on Zoom with Kirsten - Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. A half hour time of devotion with music, scripture, candle-lighting, and prayer for all ages! Zoom link sent out in the e-blast, or request at youthdirector@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com.

Seeking Support for Video Devotions - we are looking for **at least four people** to record short video devotions (2-5 minutes each) to use during Sunday evening worship. If you are interested, please contact Kirsten: youthdirector@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com.



Longest Night Worship Monday, Dec 21 at 5 PM - offered virtually

There's an Advent tradition within Western Christianity of inviting people to come together for the Longest Night, a night around the time of the winter solstice, when there are more hours of darkness than light. It's a time to come together for prayers and laments, to mourn the losses and griefs of the year, to let the tears flow for the hurting places in our own lives, as well as for our country and our world. Known also as "Blue Christmas," a Longest Night Gathering is a safe and sacred space to share anguish, to plead with God to remember us, to pray for justice and restoration, even to hope against hope, through our doubts and tears and fears, that "God will set things right all over the earth."



Christmas Eve Opportunities!

Pandemic shadowed realities in 2020 have caused us to “gather” in very different ways the majority of the year, so offering Christmas celebration opportunities that feel different is probably not a surprise. Given that we are likely to still be in the plan to provide two virtual worship opportunities this December 24--one highlighting our children’s program and the other more traditionally formatted.

We are also planning on having a **Silent Night Vigil in-person at 4 PM**. It will be outdoors, rain or shine, 20 minutes or less, with scripture reading, a brief message, candle-lighting and singing of *Silent Night* together. We will dress for the weather, wear masks, and revel in the gift of being together in person on this holy night.



COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS – October

DEVOTIONS & OPENING PRAYER: Mark Leed.

Mark shared a Poem of Blessing by John O’Donahue.

*“On the day when the weight deadens on your shoulders and you stumble,
may the clay dance to balance you. And when your eyes freeze behind the grey window
and the ghost of loss gets in to you, may a flock of colours, indigo, red, green, and azure blue come
to awaken in you a meadow of delight.*

*When the canvas frays in the currach of thought and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you, may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight to bring you safely home.*

*May the nourishment of the earth be yours, may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours, may the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow wind work these words of love around you,
an invisible cloak to mind your life.”*

TREASURER’S REPORT - Giving was down in September. Note: There were no new contributions to our StARS commitment of \$3000. Our YTD contributions to StARS is \$250 which means we owe \$2750. before the end of the year. Suggested we should put contributions in weekly e-blasts so congregation can see where we are.

YOUTH: Kirsten is at a conference so Aloria & Izaiah came to present a project that the Youth will be working on. God’s Doors. For more information check out <https://godsdoors.org>. “God’s Doors are

Open to All!”. Unanimous approval from Council to move forward with this project. Youth will keep us posted on the project and will also touch base with the Property Committee when it gets closer to time to install the doors.

RETURN TO PROPERTY TASK FORCE – Now meeting every other week. Working on plans for Phase 3. Will be sending out a Fall survey to check in with the congregation about worship.

BYLAWS – Thank you so much to Mary Allred & Karen Gustafson for all of their work on the Bylaws! We walked through the Bylaw and changes. We worked through and approved up to line 410. Unanimously approved through line 410. We will work on the rest of the Bylaws at our Council Check-In on Oct 27th.

2021 BUDGET DRAFT – Conservative Balance Budget Proposed & Reviewed.

STEWARDSHIP– Response Appeal starts this week – Theme of “Generosity”. Will end with celebration on November 22nd.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Ø Task Force Update on Sewer

Ø Unanimously approved to go ahead with Option 1 – sent back to the Capital Campaign Committee to move ahead – and come back with a formal financial proposal to present to the Council.

ANNUAL MEETING– November 15th, 1 PM via Zoom. Call-in, sign-in information to follow.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING– Tuesday November 10th at 6:30pm – Zoom Meeting