

# GRAPEVINE NEWSLETTER

January 2021

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## Pastor's Ponderings--

One of the life lessons underscored in various experiences of my life is that together we are able to do exponentially more than what any of us are able to accomplish on our own. The idea of synergy may sometimes be trendy, but I learned its meaning and the delight of living into it, experientially back in my days with Polk Teen Parent Project and continuing through my time as part of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin staff team, with powerful experiences of synergy happening along the way in Arkansas and Oklahoma as well. While current circumstances limit some of the organic energy only possible when planning and creating with others in the same room, 2020 sharing of possibilities via zoom and limited gatherings has still underscored the importance of and satisfaction that comes with teamwork.

Have you ever stopped to consider how interconnected you and we are, with millions of people? As Christians, as part of the ELCA? The ELCA is a denomination with over three million members. The ELCA has a building with staff centered in Chicago, but "The Lutheran Center," as is on its building sign, or "The God-box," as some snarkily call it, is not "The ELCA". The ELCA is not located in one place, but exists only in the amorphous space of relationship between all who identify as the ELCA. We are the ELCA.

A synod is a geographically bounded designation of congregations, with synod staff and council to facilitate ministry within this geographic area. There are currently 65 synods in the ELCA. A synod exists only in the nebulous space of relationship between all of the congregations within its geographical boundaries. As a synod we are able to have more impact in the world in combination than any one congregation can do alone. All members of all congregations in the Southwest Washington Synod are the SWWA Synod, together. We have a bishop and bishop's staff in Tacoma, and a council to help carry out the work of the synod, but *we are* the SWWA Synod.

You can probably tell where this is going. Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church only exists within the relationship of the people identifying as part of this congregation--in our relationship as members or those who choose to be associated with the congregation. We have a building, but if it were to "go away", we'd still be a congregation. We have staff, including a pastor, and an elected council to serve on behalf of the congregation but none of the identified leaders *is* the congregation. If we were to "go away", there would still be a congregation as long as there are people who associate and have relationship as such. Only together are we able to effectively live into God's will for this congregation that we might have our intended impact upon the Vancouver community and beyond.

So it is that we each have responsibility--to reach out, to nurture relationships, to communicate, and to participate in the work of the Church and congregation. And it is only as we all commit to participate in discerning God's current purpose for who we are and the impact we are uniquely called to make, together, that the energy of such clarity can carry us forward as Church in a changed world. This coming year we will center ourselves by intentionally and communally dwelling in God's word, engaging together in activities to raise up our mutually held core values and the guiding principles behind them, and through discernment identify what purpose motivates as God's faithful people in congregation. A first step will be to engage in the 2021 version of "round table" conversation--coming together for small group conversations, first through zoom for those who have that ability and then, for those not able to meet via zoom, in person when it is safe to do so. After beginning conversations we'll move deeper into discernment in larger group activity--whether by zoom or in person depending upon timing and safety considerations.

What is important and ties into my beginning reflections, is that this congregation, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, has no identity or form other than that which is created in the relationship space between all of us who are parts of the BSLC whole. What we are able to be and do as a whole, together, has power and meaning beyond simple addition of effort. Please take seriously the importance of your role in identifying and then living into the next season of this congregation's life journey. For my part I have high expectations for a synergy of possibility beyond current imagining, and I so look forward to how God's imagination is stirring through you!

*Pastor Jean*

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### **From Kirsten, Our Director of Youth and Family Ministry**

As January begins, many people make New Year's resolutions. It could be related to health, diet, or even bad habits that one wants to break. I usually make New Year's resolutions; I am the kind of person who needs to have a goal in order to make something a habit. It's probably why I like running half marathons so much! For the past several years, I have always had a resolution to read more books, and usually I start off the first week of January strong, reading every day. But, as the month goes on, my books are left on the shelf more and more often, and by March I give it up altogether. I felt guilty about not sticking with this resolution.

Maybe you have had a similar experience with New Year's resolutions or other goals, and felt guilty about not accomplishing the goal or new habit. Rather than stewing in that guilt with yourself, remember this: there is no goal or resolution that can make you any more worthy of God's love. God loves us just as we are, with all our flaws, rough edges, and bad habits. We all mess up sometimes! "...since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." (Romans 3:23) Grace frees us to live as children of God, in response to that undeserved love.

So, what is your resolution? Here are a few ideas for faith-filled resolutions in 2021:

- Memorize a Bible verse every week
- Share a Christian post on your social media
- Invite a friend to watch worship together online
- Meditate – there are lots of apps with guided meditation
- Gratitude journal

- Spiritual practice per month – such as lectio divina, visio divina, prayer writing, or a service project
  - Learn about social justice issues – such as race, climate, economic, gender, immigration, housing, etc.
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### **BSLC Winter Shelter News**

First thank you to all the cooks who have provided evening meals for our shelter guests this month. You are getting rave reviews! This year because of Covid we are operating differently and we have a new name. We are now a Satellite Overflow Shelter(SOS) along with Immanuel Lutheran Church and River City Church. We are open Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday nights staffed by Outsiders Inn through a grant from Clark County and in partnership with Council for the Homeless.



The City of Vancouver has provided funds for laundry, supplies and utilities. To increase safety for our guests, staff and volunteers, we have purchased HEPA air filters for the fellowship hall, partitions separate sleeping spaces, and increased cleaning by the shelter staff and our janitor. Everyone wears a mask except when eating or sleeping. We offer warmth, hospitality and good food for up to 15 people each night.

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church is truly a lifeline for our friends living without homes. We are blessed to be part of this important ministry! Special thanks to Don H, Kirsten, Mariellen, church council and others who have made it possible for us to open this year. And we continue to need your help to provide the evening meal. ***We ask for a pot of soup or casserole to feed 15.*** Bread, rolls and a dessert are welcome! The food can be dropped off at church at 6:30 and left to be served by shelter staff. **To sign-up for a meal click this link:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0849a4a623a2fc1-bslc3>

Cheryl Pfaff for the SOS Task Force

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### **Special Thanks from Social Ministry:**

Dear Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church Family,  
Thank you so much for your overwhelming response to our Adopt A Family this Christmas season. You purchased, wrapped and delivered an amazing array of gifts and household items to grant the wishes and meet the needs of a little boy and his Mom. She shed tears of thanksgiving when she picked them up and asked me to please send her blessing to our congregation. He was bouncing off the walls with excitement and hugs. Please keep them in your prayers. We are blessed, once again, to be there for our neighbors. Thank you for your love and care.

### Special Thanks from Pastor Jean

Dear Siblings in Christ,

You have moved me once again! Thank you to all who provided your voice, sung and/or spoken, recorded and in person, so that our Christmas worship could reflect more of our faith community and remind us of the strength of our connection that can overcome the sense of isolation when following practices to prevent pandemic spread. The results of our combined efforts meant so much to all who participated in the worship options we were able to share. And thank you to the congregation for the unexpected year end gift as well as the many expressions of care and support. Seeing the enthusiasm shared in providing gifts for the family we supported and in sharing cookies with people in the congregation who probably wouldn't have made themselves cookies this year, added to the warmth I felt in considering the generosity of this congregation. Thank you all for the witness you provide!

I am grateful to serve with you in Christ, *Pastor Jean*

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### **COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS – December 2020**

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES:** Motion to approve. 1st Sue. 2nd. Mark. Minutes approved.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** We are getting close to our StARS goal with only \$480 still needed by Jan. 31, 2021.

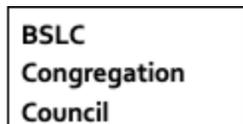
**PASTOR'S REPORT:** No official report this month as Pastor is working on getting all of our Advent/Christmas services done/recorded by Dec. 22nd .

**RETURN TO PROPERTY TASK FORCE:** Have been focusing on use of the building for the Homeless Overflow Shelter to be open couple nights a week at our building. Meeting every other week.

**HOMELESS SHELTER UPDATE:** Discussion of how shelter is going. This was the first week – will have more information at next month's meeting. Discussion that there should be 2 people on duty.

**FOCUS TIME:** What does it mean to you to be a leader in our church?

- Being a sounding board.
- Be positive, keep things going and not dwell on the negative. Treating people with respect.
- Being someone that people in the congregation can go to if they have questions or problems and need answers.
- Setting a good example - Being active in the church.
- Financial deciders
- Project approvals
- Being accessible and humble



- Attention to detail and make sure you are in the know so that if people come to with questions that you are able to answer them o
- Providing direction and listening to people (are you a person that listens, or waits to talk?)
- Leaders look for the gaps and how to fill them o Honor God's great diversity in our congregation o Permission giving, to encourage people to come forward with ideas o If someone asks a question – need to be sure and get back to them
- Communication is very important – need to try and keep everyone in the loop in some fashion – not an easy task o
- Find solutions to problems: Conflict resolution – be able to listen and understanding
- To be there for our church community
- What do our Bylaws say about leadership in the church? Karen will send out copy of new Bylaws to everyone – please look at that section by our next meeting and compare it to the list that we just did on what it means to be a leader in our church.

**COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE REPORTS:** Stewardship – pledges are coming in – so far we have received more pledges that at this time last year.

**NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSIONS:** Discussion on additional committees to help keep in contact with everyone – Communication/Information Management and Membership Management – need to keep in better communication with people. We have some volunteers who are doing this. We also need to update our church roster so that we are including everyone who wants to be included and removing those that may not want to be included. Also need to have a group looking at how effective or ineffective our social media and web presence is. Something that needs be implemented next year. If you know of anyone interested in this please let us know.

**OPEN BUSINESS - 2020** • Technology Committee – we have a tech team – but still need the communications piece (discussed in New Business) • Sewer Project – Nothing new to report – this is moving forward – will be a while • StARs – update given in Treasurer's Report  
**OPEN BUSINESS - 2021** • Small Group/Circle Conversations with Congregation – possible council members with pastor to host small groups on Zoom – max of 7 people – through guided questions. We need to also figure out how to do this with people who are not doing Zoom/internet. Some groups may not be able to meet until be can gather in small groups in person. Nancy will work with Pastor on the questions. • Congregational Council & Pastor Review Questions – Discussion of responses & plans of action - hold for now – another piece needs to be done before discussion. 3 • Covenant of Conduct – Pastor – will discuss at retreat • Committee Chair Tools – will discuss at retreat • Background Checks – send back to Mariellen – can be emailed to [bslc@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com](mailto:bslc@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com) or mailed to the church office. • Photo Directory – on hold • CPR Training Class (will also need AED training) – on hold • Insurance Presentation to Council – to understand our coverage (future meeting) To think about for January Meeting: • Election of Officers • Committee Liaisons • Council Retreat/Leadership Development – Kirsten will send out Doodle poll to help figure out a date in January for retreat – which will be our January meeting.

**THANK YOU** - Thank You outgoing Council Members – Mary, Linda, Mark & Charlie!

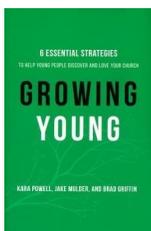
**CLOSING PRAYER:** Sue Calvert

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** 8.15pm

**REMINDERS:** Council Check In – We have cancelled the check ins for now Growing Young – Thursday Dec. 17th – 6:30pm Next Council Meeting – January will be our retreat – date TBD

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## **BOOK STUDY OPPORTUNITIES**

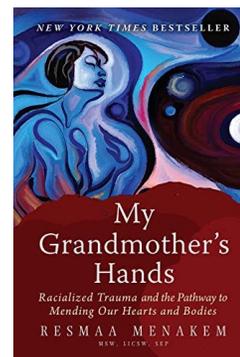


### ***Growing Young***

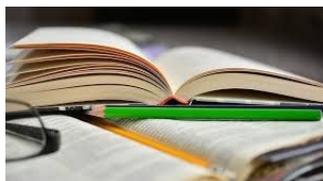
A leadership book study on 3rd Thursdays at 6:30 PM on Zoom. All are welcome to join the discussion at any time. Request a zoom link at [youthdirector@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com](mailto:youthdirector@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com)

### ***My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies -***

After George Floyd's death at the hands of a police officer last summer, many Christians, including people at BSLC, felt called to learn more, understand more, and do more. For that purpose Pastor Jean invited interested people to read a book together to spark learning and deeper conversation. Since then different groups of people have read and discussed two books. This has concretely contributed to our knowledge about racism and how we can take actions against it.



You are cordially invited to join us in a ZOOM conversation each Sunday (beginning January 17th, 3 PM) as we together read our next book, New York Times Bestseller, My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem. This book examines the way the trauma of white supremacy has become embedded in black and white bodies. Menakem, a licensed therapist, provides practical ways for us to understand and move past this trauma. If you have questions or want to join, contact Pastor Jean. Please read the first chapter of this book before our first ZOOM discussion, on Sunday, January 17 at 3 pm.



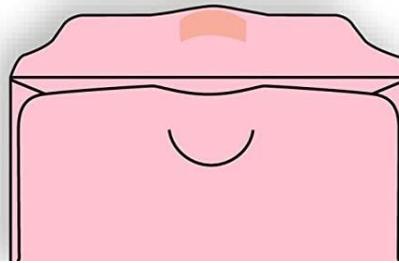
### **Bible Studies through BSLC**

**Wednesday Bible Study** with Pastor Jean meets via Zoom at **10:30 AM**. Starting January 6, the group will begin a focused study of Genesis. For the Zoom link email Pastor Jean at [pastorjean@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com](mailto:pastorjean@beautifulsaviorlutheran.com)

**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).

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**Anyone who has not yet received their offering envelopes for 2021 but would like to, please**



contact Phil and Kathe Yokers at [pkyo@aol.com](mailto:pkyo@aol.com) or by phone at 503-720-9009, and they will get them to you.