

The Luther Memorial News August 2020

We are a
Reconciling in Christ Congregation.



*A community committed to making
Christ's disciples, dedicated to worship,
study, and prayer while serving all in need.*

Rev. Monica L. Weber, Pastor

Juanita Smoot, Director of Music Ministry

Michael Spencer, Custodian

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What do you think of when you hear the word, '**Anxiety?**' Google defines 'anxiety' as, "*a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.*"

Unfortunately, anxiety is a part of human life, but we're not built for the prolonged, pervasive anxiety we continue to face due to the COVID19 pandemic. After five months of living in a state of uncertainty, nervous worry and fear, we may be "anxious about being anxious" ...we may wonder what this unwelcome, constant anxiety is doing to our bodies, our minds and our emotional well-being? How do we continue to face unanswered questions, hundreds of opinions and mixed messages about our safety? As our anxiety grows and fear overwhelms us, we can easily spiral into despair...and despair, my friends, is the work of evil, as it tries to shift our focus away from God and onto ourselves.

Our response to anxiety reflects our trust in God: never forget that God walks beside us, protects us, and will bring us safely into God's holy presence. Never forget that you are a beloved, baptized child of God, and that God has covenanted with you to give you eternal life, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. In Luke 12:22-23, Jesus says, "*Do not worry about your life...for life is more than food and the body more than clothing.*" Jesus knows that every human life is precious to God, and in Luke 12:32, he says, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Next time you feel anxious or fearful, consider that the phrase, "Do not be afraid" appears in Scripture a total of 365 times! Literally, there is a "do not fear" verse for every day of the calendar year. Take a deep breath, place your trust in God, and give up your fears and anxieties to God in Christ Jesus, who will never abandon you. —Peace to all here, *Pastor Monica*



Congregational Council Corner

Council Members:

2020

Kathy Parrott
Leah Wechtaluk McFarren
Fred Rencsok, President
Lois Voss, V. President

Committee Liaison:

Stewardship
Social Ministry
Christian Ed.
Congregational Care

Committee Chair:

Bennet Cassell
Elaine Belay
Fred Rencsok
Carol Reynolds

2021

Carol Reynolds
Mara Knott
Tim Larson
John Hess, Secretary

Fellowship
Finance & Mission Endowment
Worship & Music
Property

Marti Larson
Terry Hagman
Pastor Monica
Danny Knott

2022

Jay Crone
Andy Hansbrough
Seth Knight
Ed Vigen

Personnel
Mutual Ministry
Youth, Young Adults, & LCM
Creation Care

Kevin Carlson
Andy Hansbrough
Seth Knight
Rebekah Paulson

Actions:

Members are encouraged to use the church website and to let Marcia or Pastor Monica know what works well and what information may be difficult to locate on the website. Council recognizes how important the website has become in providing information to everyone, members, visitors, and seekers.

From the Committee on Property – the deck on the Campus Center has been stained with assistance from three members of the Well. Distribution of mulch is in progress as is staining the fence that encloses the playground.

Reviewed list of values for property insurance for 2020-2021 with these additions: garage and contents (\$45,000), contents of von Bora house (\$20,000), playground equipment (\$25,000), picnic shelter (\$5,000), and bell tower (\$20,000)

Council determined that the congregation has no interest in commercial development on the church property at this time. This action is used to inform real estate developers of our intentions when they make inquiries about the use of our property and buildings.

Finance Message:

June by the numbers:

General Treasury Income: \$35,991

General Treasury Expenses: \$37,022

Net General Treasury: - \$ 1,031

Thank you to the Congregation for their exceptional contributions in June, but we are not out of the woods yet. At the end of June (half way through the year, 50%), after all of these contributions, we had received 38% of our needed receipts for the year but our expenses were at 49% of what was budgeted. Since many of our expenses are fixed, the main threat will be that we may not be able to pay our budgeted benevolences to our local community organizations. This is a time when they need our help the most. Our checking account on June 30 had \$22,500 available to spend on salaries and expenses. Since early this year this amount has been falling by \$10,000 or more each month; due to your contributions, in June this amount only fell by \$1000. We have set a lower threshold of \$10,000 where we will need to immediately stop spending as much as we can. In order to minimize the impact to our

mission and programming we want to avoid getting to this level. We feel confident that the Congregation will continue to support the Church in these trying times and we trust in God's abundance as we share our resources to do God's work.

Peace from Christ Our Lord!



Change for Change is Changing

Since we are not going to our actual church at the moment, Change for Change has been impossible. Well, the Social Ministry Committee has a new plan, how exciting! Please don't all of you clap at once. The newsletter will focus on one charity a month.

Because of Covid-19, a lot of stores like Kroger prefer to not count change because of the germ transmission. Well, the Social Ministry Committee also prefers to not count change during this time. So please if you give money to charity make sure it is rounded up to an even dollar amount.

Also, the Social Ministry Committee likes to mix things up. Some months we might offer drive-thru options of giving. An example would be God's Work/Our Hands project on August 30, 2020. This takes place at St. Michael's church at the 10:00 a.m. drive up worship service.

Other months, a charity will be highlighted in the newsletter. You may always mail your donation to the church and sometimes an online payment will be an option.

We thank you for supporting these charities in the past.

Elaine Belay

Social Ministry Chair

God's Work, Our Hands 2020

Every year, the ELCA conducts "God's Work, Our Hands," a national day of service to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our communities. For 2020, the 4 congregations of the Blacksburg ELCA Fellowship will participate in God's Work, Our Hands by collecting items for the Women's Resource Center. During the pandemic, episodes of domestic violence have dramatically increased: the Women's Resource Center works to provide a safe space and assistance for women and children who flee violent households in the New River Valley.

Please consider donating the items listed on the flyer below; you may bring your donations to Drive-In Worship at St Michael on Sunday, Aug 30, before or after the 10am service. There will be designated volunteers to collect these items for delivery to the Center.

God has blessed us richly with countless gifts: please share your gifts generously with the women and children of the NRV who live with the threat of domestic violence.

Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley



Current Pantry Needs

Below is a list of our current needs. We accept donations at our administrative office: 1217 Grove Ave Radford, VA 24141. Please feel free to call us if you have any questions at (540) 639-9592.



We are currently in special need of non-perishable food, cleaning supplies, paper towels, toilet paper, hand and body soap, and size 4T diapers.

Canned Chicken and Tuna
Pasta Sauce (with Veggies and Meat)
Pasta
Chef Boyardee Canned Pasta
Chunky/Progresso Soups
Deluxe Mac and Cheese
Dry Milk
Mayo
Ketchup
Vegetable Oil
Canned Fruit

Fruit Packs
Juice
Cereal
Individual Snacks
Complete Pancake Mix
Pancake Syrup
Regular Coffee
Creamer
Sugar
Vegetable Oil
Size 4T and 5 Diapers

Thank you for supporting the work of the WRC!

Community: Montgomery County grapples with corona virus on empty stomachs

Appeared in the July 12, 2020 edition of the *Roanoke Times*

Food banks in Montgomery County, including those serving Virginia Tech students and locals in Blacksburg, have seen an uptick in traffic in the past few weeks and distributed more than \$15,000 in grocery gift cards.

With the coronavirus pandemic having forced students and families out of work, many have turned to meal programs in order to meet basic nutritional needs. This sudden influx has placed a tremendous strain on food assistance resources in the area.

“We’ve pretty much seen our numbers double because of the coronavirus,” said Anurag Mantha, co-founder of the student-run Food Access for Students group at Virginia Tech. “We’ve helped more people in the last few weeks than we have since our inception.”

Mantha, a 28-year-old civil engineering graduate student, and his colleague, Cortney Steele, created the organization in October 2019. They use campaign donations from the crowdfunding site GoFundMe to purchase Kroger gift cards ranging from \$150 to \$200 for students in need.

Kim Schmaus, a 20-year-old sophomore majoring in psychology and cognitive neuroscience at Virginia Tech, reached out to Food Access for Students before spring break in order to feed her family.

“My family struggles with food insecurity at times,” said Schmaus, who is from Chantilly. “I didn’t feel afraid to ask for help because at Virginia Tech, I’ve been surrounded by some of the most caring people and I knew I wouldn’t be judged.”

Schmaus said that she was “appreciative” of how helpful Mantha and Steele were and that receiving her gift card was a “quick and easy process.”

The Virginia Tech Food Security and Access Study conducted in 2019 revealed that 29% to 35% of undergraduate and graduate students are classified as food insecure, with at-risk groups including minorities, international students and those reliant on financial aid.

However, Virginia Tech students aren’t alone in their struggle with food insecurity. According to Feeding America — a hunger-relief organization that partners with food banks and pantries across the U.S. — the food insecurity rate in Montgomery County is around 14%.

The Interfaith Food Pantry of Blacksburg is just one of many organizations that serves to meet the needs of those in the community.

Sandy Hagman, a Virginia Tech graduate now in her 70s, spends her time in retirement volunteering for the pantry. The pantry is supported by a coalition of 25 churches in the area and has been in operation for 32 years.

“During normal times, we average around 637 clients a month from 257 households,” said Hagman, who serves on the pantry’s advisory board. “Clients come once a month and a volunteer follows them with a shopping cart where they can choose from a variety of dried goods, canned goods, meat and toiletries.”

Hagman and her team had to streamline their services once the coronavirus hit Montgomery County. They reduced their staff of around 200 volunteers to only 20 to 25 who serve full-time to help prepackage meal bags.

“Now when people come up to the pantry, they drive up to our tent and a volunteer brings out a paper sack of food and helps them put it in their trunk,” said Hagman. “We’re sorry that we can’t allow them to go in anymore, but this helps everyone in terms of exposure.”

With the Bureau of Labor Statistics reporting that more than 21 million Americans are unemployed, food pantries and similar organizations around the nation are starting to crack under the pressure.

“In the United States, we’re seeing massive disruptions in our food system that are reminiscent of the Great Depression,” said Courtney Thomas, a collegiate assistant professor at Virginia Tech who specializes in food security. “At the same time that you have thousands of people trying to get food aid, farmers are dumping their crops.”

Before the pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that around 14.3 million Americans, or 11.1%, were found to be food-insecure in 2018. Though this figure was down from 11.8% the year before, Thomas says that this progress is likely to be reversed.

“When we look at the 2020 numbers, I think we’re going to see a massive spike in food insecurity because of the economic realities that we’re seeing right now,” said Thomas. “Many families are food-insecure for the first time, which puts pressure on existing structures like food banks, pantries and the SNAP program.”

Since the coronavirus forced the university to close in March, Food Access for Students saw an uptick in requests, sometimes up to five a day. Mantha said they began running out of funds towards the end of April and considered turning clients away.

Mantha also said that Virginia Tech’s Dean of Students emergency grant was depleted by the end of spring semester, as they were unequipped to handle the thousands of students requesting food and economic relief.

Hagman said that at the beginning of the crisis, they were only receiving 30% of what they normally ordered from the University City Boulevard Kroger in Blacksburg. “We were getting concerned because our shelves were noticeably bare,” she said.

Not all is lost for food banks in Blacksburg. The Interfaith Food Pantry received 20,000 pounds of food from a Mormon church in Utah a few weeks ago which helped to replenish dwindling supplies.

“Though our needs aren’t going down, the community has been extremely supportive,” said Hagman.

After additional fundraising and a \$2,500 donation from Virginia Tech’s Dean Karen DePauw, Food Access for Students now has roughly \$11,000 in cash and Kroger gift cards to carry them through the summer.

Aside from worries concerning food supply and funding, Food Access for Students and the Interfaith Food Pantry have been working to overcome the stigma surrounding food banks. Virginia Tech’s study found that only 9% of food-insecure students have relied on food assistance programs, with most hesitant to utilize those resources due to pride or religious stigma.

“We’ve interacted with a lot of students that say they don’t like to ask for help and that this is their last resort,” said Mantha. “But the fact that Courtney and I are students and that we don’t ask a lot of questions helps.”

The Interfaith Food Pantry is supported by community churches and places of worship, but Hagman says that they don't distribute any religious materials and are welcoming of all faiths.

"We have Christian churches — Protestant and Catholic — and people from the Jewish and Muslim communities, too," said Hagman. "We have a little bit of everybody."

Though these programs may be helpful in the short-term, Thomas says that the monthly food supply families receive from a pantry is not nearly enough.

"Food banks, pantries and soup kitchens are wonderful ways to enhance food security, but they don't solve the problem of hunger," said Thomas. "We need to create more food where struggling populations are concentrated, and this can be achieved through initiatives like community gardens and rooftop farming.

"It's all about reconceptualizing the food system to acknowledge food as a human right," she added.

Mantha suggests that raising wages would help those living on the edge of food security. "People here live paycheck to paycheck," said Mantha. "There is no middle class in Blacksburg. You're either well-to-do or you're barely scraping by."

Mantha is unsure of what the fall semester will bring as President Timothy Sands recently announced plans for partial in-person classes until Thanksgiving break. At the least, he expects more fundraising will be needed. "The community has been so generous to me since I've been here at Virginia Tech, and I just want to be able to give back to them," Mantha said.

Submitted by Meghan Schmidt, Class of 2021, Virginia Tech Communication Sciences and Political Science

Nita's Notes – August 2020

In response to this time of pandemic and social unrest in which many people continue to struggle finding and adjusting to their altered living arrangements in both personal and collective manners, I selected our AUG 2nd sending hymn, "**Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ**". Yes, it is a communion setting and even though we are not able to regularly participate in the unique experience of the Holy Eucharist, we are indeed joined to Christ and in the universal body of believers. This hymn gathers us as one and then sends us out individually to minister to others. It reflects a spirit of joy and hope through its message of love and unity.

"**Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ**" is based on the scripture passage, Luke 10:1-9, where Jesus sends out the seventy disciples to teach them about ministering to others. The text was written by **Fred Kaan (1929-2009)** to be used with a **Jamaican folk tune**, which had been adapted by the composer, **Doreen Potter (1925-1980)** in 1975. Fred Kaan was born in Haarlem, Netherlands where he lived through the Nazi occupation. His parents were very involved in the Dutch Resistance and during his teenage years, he became a pacifist and church member. He was educated at Western College, Bristol, England and in 1955 became an ordained minister in the United Reformed Church. Upon accepting the pastorate at Pilgrim Church, Plymouth in 1963, he began writing hymns to summarize and follow his sermons. These hymns often expressed his views as an ecumenical Christian and caring world citizen who advocated for many social actions through peace and justice. By 1968, Kaan became minister secretary of the International Congregational Council in Geneva, from 1970-78 secretary of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches and the chairman for the Council for World Mission. He is said to have visited faith communities in 82 countries. In 1985 he returned to the pastorate. Throughout his retirement he continued to write hymns and support human rights. He is remembered as a humble man

whose influence was felt throughout the world. In reference to his writing style, Kaan said that hymnody should be: “earth-bound, people focused and Christ-centered.”

Today’s hymn was first used at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi in 1975 and again in Vancouver in 1983. The hymn tune is known as **LINSTEAD** and has been called the “Communion Calypso”. Ms. Potter was born in Panama where she studied piano and violin. She moved to England where she received a music degree at Trinity College, London. She later married Phillip Potter who served as the general secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. Through him, she met Fred Kaan and began writing tunes for his hymn texts. In 1975 they published 20 new hymns, including “Let Us Tongues and Talents Employ”, in a collection, *Break Not the Circle*.

You may enjoy watching the following videos of the way choirs were able to gather and sing this hymn pre-Covid!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVj3jBR4RYI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJdSjR7VA6Q>

You may also enjoy reading this article published in *The Hymn* in which Fred Kaan talks about his journey as a writer of hymns.

<https://hymnary.org/files/articles/Kaan%2C%20My%20Hymn%20Writing%20Journey.pdf>

Our hymnal contains another Kaan text: ELW 603, “**God When Human Bonds Are Broken**”.

Follow Luther Memorial on *Instagram*



@luthermemorialblacksburg

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE BORN IN AUGUST



<i>August 02</i>	<i>Anna & John Westwood</i>
<i>August 04</i>	<i>Elena Oosterhuis</i>
<i>August 07</i>	<i>Harper Kennedy</i>
<i>August 09</i>	<i>Mary K. Smith</i>
<i>August 10</i>	<i>Jennifer Freeman, Konrad Kubin</i>
<i>August 13</i>	<i>Glen Earthman, Elizabeth Grant</i>
<i>August 14</i>	<i>Jim Westwood</i>
<i>August 16</i>	<i>Mark Pierson</i>
<i>August 17</i>	<i>Zelma Harris</i>
<i>August 20</i>	<i>Casey Knott, Don Marickovich</i>
<i>August 21</i>	<i>Melissa Knocke</i>
<i>August 22</i>	<i>Morgan Knott</i>
<i>August 25</i>	<i>Monica Weber</i>
<i>August 26</i>	<i>Marcia Barrow</i>
<i>August 29</i>	<i>Alice Feret</i>

Happy Anniversary



<i>Phil and Jan Gilbertson; August 1st</i>
<i>Seth and Alison Knight; August 4th</i>
<i>Ed and Wava Vigen; August 5th</i>
<i>Andy and Mary Hansbrough & Kathy Parrott and David Wechtaluk; August 6th</i>
<i>Bill and Gail King; August 10th</i>
<i>David and Elizabeth Grant; August 12th</i>
<i>Randy and Barb Shifflett; August 22nd</i>

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church

600 Prices Fork Road

Blacksburg, VA 24060



STEWARDSHIP NUGGET FOR AUGUST 2020

“The first steps toward stewardship are awareness, appreciation, and the selfish desire to have things around for our kids to see. Presumably the unselfish motives will follow as we wise up.” **Barbara Kingsolver**