The Luther Memorial News August & September 2021

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

Marcia Barrow, Office Manager

Church Contact Information:

Phone: 951-1000

Email: luther@lmlc.org

Web: http://www.lmlc.org



A Quick look at Aug/Sept:

Thursdays: 7pm Women's Bible Study

August 14-23: Welcome Week, Virginia Tech Students

August 16: Pastor Libby Pfaff begins serving as campus pastor for The Well

August 21: Jim Wilson & Tom Wilson Memorial Service, 11am at LMLC

August 22: LMLC Council Meeting, Fellowship Hall at 11:30am

August 23: First Day of Classes, Virginia Tech



September 3: Virginia Tech Home Game vs. UNC/The Well football parking

September 4: The Well at Gobblerfest

September 11: Virginia Tech Home Game vs MTSU/The Well football parking

September 12: The Forum Adult Class Resumes, 8:45am in the Campus Center Fred Rencsok's Adult Class Resumes, 9am in Fellowship Hall

September 25: Virginia Tech Home Game vs Richmond/The Well football parking



The Luther Memorial Offices are now open by appointment for church business, Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm, as we safely move toward the full reopening of our facilities. Please call Office Manager Marcia Barrow at 540-951-1000 to schedule.

Pastor Monica is available for conversations, counseling and spiritual direction. To make an appointment with Pastor Monica, please call her at 540-951-1003, or email pastormonica@lmlc.org.

From your pastor:

We didn't expect to be here, especially in the height of summer. We are stunned to watch the Delta variant of the COVID virus run rampant across this nation. We are shocked that hospitalization rates are higher now than they were in Spring of 2020. We're astonished because since May, thanks to the miracle of vaccinations, we've enjoyed relatively safe gatherings, without masks. We caught up with beloved friends and family, in person. We worshiped in person. We hugged and shook hands and greeted each other with smiling faces. Now, all of that is coming to a crashing halt. The hope we dared to hope is being dashed against a big, craggy rock of disappointment and failure: failure to trust science; failure to love and respect neighbor; failure to accomplish plans for travel and special gatherings; and the failure to experience that longed-for, pre-pandemic 'normal.' Fear has reared its ugly head once more.

Yet God in Christ Jesus stands firm, because Jesus is our one, true rock. He remains unmoved, always beside us in this abnormal, abysmal situation of suffering and lament. We must remember that Christ is God-with-Us, Emanuel. Jesus suffers as we suffer; Jesus feels what we feel; Jesus understands our anger, our fatigue, and our sadness. No matter what we face in this life, Jesus has promised never to abandon us, because we have been claimed by God and marked with water and the Spirit of baptism. Jesus will bring us into eternal life with God that transcends every ounce of this earthly suffering and uncertainty. When you're tempted to despair, trace your baptismal cross on your forehead with a finger, and give thanks that the Risen Christ lives in you, and you in the Risen Christ. That cross is permanent and eternal, no matter what happens.

If you're struggling right now, please reach out to me. I'm here for you, to listen, to accompany and to pray with you. We need each other as siblings in Christ now, more than ever, as together we navigate these prolonged pandemic challenges. I know that God is with us in the midst of this situation, and I trust that God will deliver us, because God keeps God's promises. Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah (40:31), "But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." May you find comfort in this verse, and may God keep you safe, and give you hope. Peace to all here,

Pastor Monica

Women's Covenant Study:

All women are invited to join the **Women's Covenant Bible study**. We meet on **Thursdays at 7pm by Zoom.** The theme for this unit is called "**Living,**" as we read Scripture and discuss God's covenant that brings us fruitful lives, many blessings and eternal promises. This unit runs **through September 30.** If you'd like to join this study, please contact Pastor Monica.

August Council Meeting: 22nd, 11:30am-Fellowship Hall. Staff & Council members please submit your monthly reports to Marcia Barrow in a PDF file no later than Wednesday, August 18th. Packets will be distributed by email.

September Council Meeting: 19th, 11:30am-Fellowship Hall. Staff & Council members please submit your monthly reports to Marcia Barrow in a PDF file no later than Monday, September 13th. Packets will be distributed by email.

Congregational Council Corner

2021

John Hess, Secretary jlhess@vt.edu
Mara Knott knott@vt.edu
Tim Larson tilarson@vt.edu
Carol Reynolds carol@quintinz.com

2022

Jay Crone jaycrone@vt.edu

Andy Hansbrough, President andy.hansbrough@kollmorgen.com

Gail King glkng2@gmail.com
Ed Vigen ed.vigen48@gmail.com

2023

Elaine Belay elainebelay@gmail.com
Teresa Cassell teresa.cassell@comcastmnet
Carolyn Howard, Vice President carric2003@gmail.com
Karl Pedersen@msn.com

June by the numbers:

General treasury receipts: \$35,767.17 (+ \$11,925.40 over last month)

General treasury expenses: \$45,512.03 (+ \$19,209.98 over last month)

Net, General treasury: -\$9,744.86 (- \$7,284.58 from last month)

Accounting checking balance 6/30: \$136,310.21 (-\$1,974.30 over last month) Actual Bank checking balance 6/30: \$144,148.59 (+\$4,838.81 over last month)

Actual Bank checking balance 7/16: \$142,763.37

At the end of June, our income and expenses should be about 50% of budget (for lines incurred continuously over the year). Pledge receipts of \$27,409 in June increased over prior month. However, some of these June pledges were actually a carryover from pledges received in late May that weren't booked until June. Nevertheless, the total pledges received for the year are at 51% of the budget. Expenses to date are at 51.6% of the new Revised budget. While net income for the month was negative, -\$9745, the net income for the year is \$63,264 due primarily to the PPP Loan of \$49,297. For info, the PPP Loan was formally forgiven by the Small Business Administration in July. The financial situation was stable enough to recommend to Council that the second installment of quarterly benevolences be paid in the amount of \$5,600. While the church's finances are now in a good place, it is still important to keep up with our donations as the bump in our financial situation was due to the PPP Loan. That loan has been spent and is no longer available to pay our continuing expenses going forward. Thank you to everyone who has supported us to date either financially and by volunteering their time!

Council Votes to Resume Mask Wearing -

Based on a recommendation from the LMLC Covid Task Force, your congregation Council voted to return to full-time wearing of masks for worship, indoor meetings and activities at Luther Memorial. This decision was based on several factors including advice from the CDC, public health officials and the rapid rise of the Delta variant in our communities. In addition, a Sign-In Table will be set up in the Narthex: please sign in as you attend worship, for potential contact-tracing. If you do not wish to attend in-person worship, we invite you to live-stream our Sunday services (visit lmlc.org for the link).

DIGITAL WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Out of town or unable to attend a Luther Memorial worship service in person? Check out these opportunities for digital worship:

Watch Luther Memorial worship LIVE via digital livestream, every Sunday at 10am. You may commune with your bread/wine or grape juice at the same time the congregation communes. Go to lmlc.org Home Page, scroll down and click the LIVESTREAM WORSHIP link on any device.

Watch Pastor Bryan Katz' new **Peace & Hope ELCA Digital Worship**, every Sunday at 10am and 7pm, using the AltarLive! digital app. Pastor Monica and other VA Synod clergy will preach for Peace & Hope. To watch the live service, click here: https://app.altarlive.com/stream/k7uk-2s5m-pg5zd

The in-person Faith and Life Class led by Phil Jordan will start at 10:00 am on Thursday, September 9th. The topic is "Skeptics and Believers: Religious Debate in the Western Intellectual Tradition". We will watch a 30 minute video lecture by Grinnell College religion professor Tyler Roberts followed by discussion. It's central theme revolves around 'religion and modernity' from the time of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment through all manner of 19th and 20th century movements. It will focus on such thinkers as Descartes, Kant, Schleiermacker, Marx, Freud and Barth, to name just a few. Classes will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

Luther Forum Begins September 12th

After a summer break, the Luther Forum begins meeting again on **Sunday, September 12th, at 8:45am**, in the **Campus Ministry Building**. The Forum is one of the opportunities Luther Memorial offers adults to engage in ongoing Christian education and growth. This class's fall focus will be a book study of **Richard Rohr's** *The Universal Christ*. Rohr is well known for his devotional writings and daily online meditations: https://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/. Participants have generally obtained their own copy of the books studied, but if you need a copy ordered for you, please contact the church office by August 27th: https://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/.

The class will meet **in person**, but it will also be available on **Zoom** to those whose circumstances make it dangerous or difficult to meet face to face. The Zoom link will be sent to all those who were in the class during the spring. If you are interested in joining the class via zoom you need only **request the link** from Bill King at luthercm@gmail.



Change in Plans for God's Work Our Hands Sunday September 12th:

Due to the high spread of the COVID Delta variant in our communities, the Blacksburg-Radford ELCA Fellowship clergy have determined that it would not be advisable to conduct a large gathering with shared food and singing over a period of several hours. The "Homecoming" picnic & hymn-sing will be rescheduled for a future date when it is safe.

Instead, please join us for a **God's Work/Our Hands Drive-In worship service on Sunday September 12th, 10am at St Michael Lutheran.** You may "BYOC," bring your own chair and be seated in the small parking lot at St Michael, fully masked and socially distanced, or remain in your car for this service.

During this service we will bless the donations you bring for the Women's Resource Center in Radford, to support women and children who flee from abusive households. See the list below for items to donate. There will be a designated drop-off site at the September 12th worship service. **Please do not drop off WRC donations in the LMLC Narthex or Fellowship Hall**: if you can't attend the Drive-In service, please bring your donations to the church office Mon-Fri 9am-4pm before **September 10th**.

Current WRC Pantry Needs:

Canned Chicken & Tuna, Pasta Sauce, Chef Boyardee Canned Pasta, Chunky/Progresso Soups, Deluxe Mac & Cheese, Shelf-Stable Milk, Mayo, Ketchup, Vegetable Oil, Canned Fruit, Fruit Packs, Juice, Cereal, Individual Snacks, Complete Pancake Mix, Syrup, Regular Coffee, Dry Coffee Creamer, Sugar, Size 4-6 Diapers, Ziplock Bags, Small & Large Trash Bags, Laundry Detergent, Dish Detergent, Paper Towels, Toilet Paper, Hand & Body Soap, and Cleaning Supplies.

Blessings to Pastor Libby Pfaff, The Well's New Campus Pastor!

On August 7th, Luther Memorial hosted our **first-ever ordination** as Libby Pfaff entered the **Ministry of Word & Sacrament**. Pastor Libby will serve Christ Lutheran-Radford half-time, and The Well half-time, effective August 15th. We give deep gratitude to the Shared Call Committee members: Carolyn Howard, chair; Zelma Harris; Karl Pedersen; Erin Wachter; Ryan McIlwee; Margaret Hoskins; Clyde Kessler; Lee Brouwer. A special thanks to Bishop Robert Humphrey of the Virginia Synod; to Rev. Joanne Enquist for preaching; to Karl Pedersen, Sandra Hagman, Diane Catley, Kathy Parrott and Carol Reynolds for hosting the reception; to Ed Vigen and John Hess for ushering and assisting; Lois Voss for monitoring the sign-in table and taking photos; Katrina Schmid for serving as Assisting Minister; Lianna Almeida for serving as Crucifer; Amber Higginbotham for serving as Acolyte; the LMLC Choristers and Nita Smoot for the beautiful worship music and anthem; Debbie Higginbotham at Christ Lutheran for photos and ordering the cake and fruit; to Rev. Dr. Bryan Katz and Daniel Taylor for technical assistance; and Marcia Barrow for preparing the worship bulletin and assisting Pastor Monica with setup and other details. Please pray for Pastor Libby as she transitions into this new call, and help her feel welcome! You may email **Pastor Libby at thewell@lmlc.org**.



The Well is now a Reconciling in Christ Affiliate!

We praise God and congratulate the members of The Well for achieving their recent status as an affiliate organization of Reconciling in Christ! **ReconcilingWorks** is the ELCA organization dedicated to welcome and affirmation of all people, just as they are, made in God's holy image. Luther Memorial has been an RIC affiliate since 2003. This effort was initiated by Well students and Vicar Alyssa Kaplan in February 2021; after months of faithful work, RIC recognized The Well with official affiliation status. The RIC logo and literature will be posted in The Well Campus Center as we welcome new and returning students to campus in the coming days. A press release announcing The Well's RIC affiliation will be distributed to local media and Virginia Tech campus ministry networks.



The Well's RIC Welcome Statement & Covenant:

"God loves us and calls us to love. We are called to welcome and affirm all, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, denomination affiliation, or any barrier that divides us, because God's love unites us. Through discipleship and active service to our community, we strive to intentionally deepen our relationship with God and one another, and to uphold the values of our covenant."

OUR COVENANT:

As a campus ministry, it is our responsibility to provide for the wellbeing of our greater communities of students at Virginia Tech and beyond. As students, we are called to learn. The Well Lutheran Campus Ministry was founded as a safe, affirming space for students to learn and grow, in respective academic fields and in faith. It is our mission to learn and teach about the extraordinary extent of God's love.

- Our community believes that God's love is limitless and extends to all people, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, denomination, physical or mental health, socio-economic circumstances, or faith tradition. God's love unites us.
- Our community actively welcomes, affirms, and supports members of LGBTQIA+ communities, and is committed to racial equity and advocating for marginalized groups and peoples at Virginia Tech and around our nation and world.
- Our community is dedicated to learning and teaching members and individuals of our surrounding communities about the importance of service, especially in uplifting oppressed communities around the world. We abide by Virginia Tech's motto, "Ut Prosim: That I May Serve", recognizing that service is more than an action; it is a commitment.
- Our community is united in our recognition that we are God's children, and all people are God's children. We support and affirm one another in our faith journeys, and we promote opportunities to grow in faith together.

We uphold the values of our covenant with the knowledge that there is room for everyone at God's table. So come, take a seat, and be at peace.





In the month of July, LMLC members and friends served the world as God's Hands, doing God's Work, through:

- *Donated funds that provided \$300 in Kroger cards to families in need
- *337lbs of food, including 450 packages of macaroni & cheese donated to the Interfaith Food Pantry
- *A \$300 donation to sponsor the Virginia Synod's new digital ministry, "Peace & Hope" for 6 months
- *47 cans of fruit donated to "Christmas in July" for the Christmas Store
- *\$1400+ donated to the ELCA Fund for Leaders in honor of Rev. Libby Pfaff's ordination, for seminary scholarships

Thank you for generously supporting our ministry to God's people in need!

Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry Report



The Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry is planning for a full re-open on **September 1**st, there will be changes.

Traditionally Luther Memorial has volunteered the second and third Wednesdays of each month. The Pantry is now closed on Fridays. In order to give every church a chance at providing volunteers, **Luther Memorial will staff the Pantry on the second Wednesday of each month from 10:00 -11:30 am.**

If the number of customers increases, the hours might be extended until noon. If needed, we can consider volunteering for the fifth Wednesday or Thursday of the month.

In the beginning, only 2 customers at a time will be allowed to shop. Volunteers will also offer direct delivery to a customer's car. Many clients now prefer that we just bring the groceries to their car instead of coming into the Pantry to shop. Serving at the Pantry may require filling grocery bags and lifting them and pushing a full cart to a car and loading the groceries. Masks are not required but you are welcome to wear one. An additional air filtration system has been installed at the Pantry and weather permitting all doors are opened for optimal air flow.

Luther Memorial also has another team in place that picks up food orders on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Food Lion on North Main. We then unpack the food and store it on the shelves at the Pantry. There is heavy lifting involved with the Food Lion pickups. We could use a couple of volunteers as backups when the other team members are unavailable.

If you are interested in **volunteering for either of these Luther Memorial sponsored ministries**, please contact **Sandy Hagman (540-951-0270** or **sandy.hagman@comcast.net**).

CHANGE 4 CHANGE for September is for the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry

Thank you for your continuing support of the Food Pantry. It has been especially needed during this time of the COVID pandemic. The Pantry will be completely reopened on September 1st. We will begin allowing customers in the Pantry for shopping if they prefer instead of bringing food out to them.



In coordination with **Change for Change**, **Luther Memorial** is doing a **special project** for the Pantry during the month of September. We are going to **create** *birthday bags* for the children of our customers. These are very popular. A birthday bag typically contains cake mix, a can of frosting, candles, plates, cups, and napkins for 8 children. Additionally, we like to add a coloring book and crayons or small puzzle for eight.

We would like to assemble 50 bags for the Pantry so what do we need? **During the month of September, drop off cake mix, frosting, and candles in the Narthex**. Sandy Hagman will take the money donated during the month and purchase the bags, plates, cups, and napkins and either coloring books or puzzles from one of the dollar stores.

On Sunday, October 3^{rd} after the service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall to assemble the bags.

Thank You, Danny Knott!

On behalf of everyone at Luther Memorial, I'd like to extend deep gratitude to our Property Chairperson, Danny Knott, for his many years of faithful service. Danny recently retired as Property Chair, and this congregation owes him a great debt for keeping our campus beautiful and in good repair. He has given countless hours to perform many thankless tasks both large and small, day and night, and we appreciate his dedication and his faithful servanthood. Please take the opportunity to express your gratitude to Danny. If you would like to serve on the Property Committee, please contact Property Council Convener John Hess, or me. Peace, *Pastor Monica*

UPDATE: BLACKSBURG REFUGEE PARTNERSHIP GOING TO COLLEGE -

Five years ago LMLC join with other area congregations and civic groups to create the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership. Two Syrian and 4 Afghani families arrived shortly thereafter. Today, all adults and older children are working. All have Green Cards. And three of the children are heading to college. One, a boy, will attend Virginia Tech this fall. He will pursue a pre-med program while his sister will be at Radford, also on a pre-med track. To be doctors is their shared dream. A third student will be at New River Community College.

Blacksburg Refugee Partnership has set up an educational fund. This is not only for these three students. There are 16 other children whom, it is hoped, will opt to go onto higher education. All will seek financial aid. The Partnership's educational fund will be a part of their support. If you are interested in contributing to this fund, a donation can be sent to the church office specifically noted: Blacksburg Refugee Partnership Educational Fund.

For more information, contact Wava Vigen: wavabburg@gmail.com or 571-1276 5079.



Do you shop online with Amazon? Shop at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to Luther Memorial Lutheran Church—no fees and no extra cost to you! Visit smile.amazon.com to enroll and select Luther Memorial Lutheran Church as your charity – click on thislink to get started (https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-0857187)!

The **CreationCare Committee** gives thanks for the beautiful **Bluebird house donated by Carol Reynolds** for the No Mow Pollinator Garden. We will install "The Backyard Bird Company" bluebird house before March 2022 and pray for a brood during the spring nesting season. Thank you Carol for this

lovely and generous gift.



Lawn Begone and Edible Yards by Su Clausen special for *The Roanoke Times* Learn more about eliminating turf grass lawns!

July 4, 2021

"Turf grass lawns adorn home sites across the nation, but their maintenance, water requirements and ecological issues have some New River Valley residents considering lawn alternatives that may be better for the planet, their schedules and their bank accounts. Many are increasingly interested in native plants that nourish birds and other wildlife. Some of these natives are still called weeds."

https://roanoke.com/news/local/lawn-begone/article_b0e5dbde-d9d8-11eb-80c3-bf9bb94d9518.html

July 18, 2021

"This story is a second installment about a movement to use more yard space for something other than turf grass.

"We set minimum standards to preserve owner rights and make room for diversity," said Dave Darnell, Blacksburg code inspector.

A NASA study using satellite imagery shows lawns are the No. 1 irrigated "crop" in the nation, taking up an area the size of Wisconsin. While grasses reduce storm water runoff and soak up the atmosphere's excess carbon dioxide, lawns often require massive amounts of water, especially in drought-stricken areas."

https://roanoke.com/news/local/edible-landscaping-farming-the-yard/article b7c23f46-e591-11eb-84dc-e71540a086d5.html



NITA'S NOTES

Once again we find ourselves adjusting to the Covid world and its impact on our lives. Our LMLC choir continues to rehearse and sing during worship wearing masks and taking precautions involving time, space and hygiene. We continue to follow the guidelines set out by our Covid Task Force and Church Council. It was absolutely wonderful to have lessened singing restrictions earlier in the summer and we've been enjoying singing some of the more familiar anthems in the music anthem library. Yes, it has indeed been a joy and blessing to join together to worship and to sing again in community. I am very thankful for our faithful volunteers who give of their time, energy and gifts.

One of my projects this summer was to create an updated 9 field Excel spreadsheet of all of the anthems in our music files. Currently we have about 435 anthems! The oldest copyright I found was from 1913!! Although some are no longer conducive to our ears and vocal ranges, there are also some delightful and age-old gems which we will be sharing in worship this season. I appreciate Carol Reynolds who is now volunteering her time to help me with the final task to straighten files and number anthem copies.

Our sanctuary piano will be tuned in AUG and some long-awaited organ tuning and repairs in SEPT. Our Hymn Selection Committee will meet AUG 23 to select our hymns for SEPT thru Christ the King Sunday. Then our final meeting of the year will be to select hymns for Advent and Christmas! How is that even possible? It has been a quick year, or am I just getting older and it seems that way?

We move forward and continue praying for the patience and grace to navigate through this time of upheaval and change. We know that God does not change. Our trust is in God, the source of our being and in Jesus, the source of our joy and salvation. May the Holy Spirit breathe into us the calm and peace which we need so that we are able to offer true serenity to all those in our path.

"I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony." May the sentiment of this 70's song of unity be the prayer and desire of our hearts.

Joyfully Yours, Nita



August 04 Elena Oosterhuis

August 07 Harper Kennedy

August 09 Mary K Smith

August 10 Jennifer Freeman

Konrad Kubin

August 13 Glen Earthman

Elizabeth Grant

August 16 Mark Pierson

August 17 Zelma Harris

August 20 Don Marickovich

August 21 Melissa Knocke

August 25 *Monica Weber*

August 26 *Marcia Barrow*

August 29 Alice Feret

September 05 Danny Knott

September 10 Carolyn Howard

Rebekah Paulson

September 11 Jenny Akers

September 23 Andy Hansbrough

September 27 Mary Hansbrough



Jan and Philip Gilbertson; August 01
Alison and Seth Knight; August 04
Ed and Wava Vigen; August 05
Kathy Parrott and David Wechtaluk; August 06
Bill and Gail King; August 10
David and Elizabeth Grant; August 12
Barb and Randy Shifflett; August 22
Andy and Mary Hansbrough; August 26
Linda and George Libey; September 01

God & Pastor Monica Need YOU!

As we return to indoor worship, we need volunteers to serve as Ushers, Greeters, Lectors, Assisting Ministers, Acolytes, Tellers and sponsors for Altar Flowers. Please be generous with your time and talents, to participate as a member of our faith community! There many tasks to be done on Sunday mornings are all easy, and performing them is sacred work. For more information, please email pastormonica@lmlc.org.

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church 600 Prices Fork Road Blacksburg, VA 24060



STEWARDSHIP NUGGET FOR AUG/SEPT 2021

"No one has ever become poor by giving."

-Anne Frank