

# The Luther Memorial News November 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**

**Vicar Alyssa Kaplan, Lay Campus Minister**

**Juanita Smoot, Director of Music Ministry**

**Michael Spencer, Custodian**

**Marcia Barrow, Office Manager**

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November is a time for giving thanks and an 'attitude of gratitude,' but have you ever literally written down our blessings? When we itemize the ways that God has blessed us, we're astonished and humbled. Keeping a list of our life's blessings reminds us that God wants us to flourish, no matter how far we stray from God and God's will. I encourage you to take a few sheets of paper and write down every blessing you've experienced, then review your list every day for a week. Gratitude is a habit that we too often neglect, and it's easy to forget that all our blessings come from God, not from earthly powers, 'luck,' or our own effort.

Gratitude is a good and right expression to give our Creator God, but as baptized members of the universal Body of Christ, we are called to put our gratitude into action. Over and over again in the Gospels, Jesus gives thanks and glory to God by bringing about human reconciliation: reconciliation with friends; with family; with community; with God. Jesus teaches us to act in a posture of gratitude that helps usher in the reign of God, where reconciliation and mercy take priority over punishment and penalty.

America remains bitterly divided along political lines, but this isn't new: deep divisions have existed in the peoples of God across all nations and generations, because we are first and foremost imperfect sinners who pursue our own gratification, instead of the well-being of our neighbor. The words 'gratitude' and 'gratification' may originate from the same root, but we're very good at interpreting words, laws and doctrines to suit our selfish interests. Christ Jesus calls us to enact reconciliation, underpinned by gratitude.

In Luke 6:27-31, Jesus says, "*But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.*"

Be grateful and humble. Work for reconciliation. Give generously, as God has first given to you. Let petty arguments and comments go, and instead of pursuing revenge, pursue the will of God for your life, because God has claimed you as a precious, forgiven child. —Peace to all here, *Pastor Monica*



## Congregational Council Corner

### 2020

Fred Rencsok, President [rencsok@verizon.net](mailto:rencsok@verizon.net)  
Kathy Parrott [homes@vt.edu](mailto:homes@vt.edu)  
Leah Wechtaluk McFarren [lwechtal@vt.edu](mailto:lwechtal@vt.edu)  
Lois Voss, V. President [loisvoss@aol.com](mailto:loisvoss@aol.com)

### 2021

Carolynn Howard [carric2003@gmail.com](mailto:carric2003@gmail.com)  
Mara Knott [knott@vt.edu](mailto:knott@vt.edu)  
Tim Larson [tilarson@vt.edu](mailto:tilarson@vt.edu)  
John Hess, Secretary [jlhess@vt.edu](mailto:jlhess@vt.edu)

### 2022

Jay Crone [jaycrone@vt.edu](mailto:jaycrone@vt.edu)  
Andy Hansbrough [andy.hansbrough@kollmorgen.com](mailto:andy.hansbrough@kollmorgen.com)  
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Ed Vigen [ed.vigen48@gmail.com](mailto:ed.vigen48@gmail.com)

Accepted the recommendation of the COVID-19 Task Force that in-person worship will not be planned for the next five months. During this period, the Council will revisit options each month as the Task Force evaluates updates of regional/state data and guidelines about the pandemic.

Approved recruiting a full-year, half-time, ordained campus pastor to care for campus ministry at VT.

Approved forwarding to the congregation for action at the annual meeting the proposed spending plan for 2021, which includes compensation for the part-time campus pastor. Although total proposed expenditures, \$413,780, are \$19,000 less than in 2020, increased pledges are needed to support this plan.

Approved use of the laundry in the campus center - students will abide by the guidelines in the accepted covenant agreement and formally schedule use of the laundry. As approved in a previous meeting, Council and leadership from the Well will review the use and care of the facility at the close of fall semester.

Needed reinforcement for the north wall in the Fellowship Hall will cause a delay in completing the project. Election day voting will occur in the Narthex, since the renovation of the fellowship hall will not be completed by November 3.

In order to optimize safety and minimize opportunities for intimidation, Approved posting “no firearms allowed on premises” at the entry doors to the church buildings and an exterior sign on the fence by the lower parking lot.

Approved the posting a sign/flag supporting Black Lives Matter. Final details of displaying this message will be guided by the sign ordinance of the town of Blacksburg.

### September by the numbers:

General Treasury income: \$24,674  
General Treasury expenses: \$35,587  
Net General Treasury: - \$10,913

As you can see, we are still losing money every month and our margin for paying salaries and expenses is getting thinner. We very much appreciate every effort that the Congregation is making to support us in these trying times not only for the Church but for yourselves. Despite this less than rosy financial picture, Council boldly decided in its early November meeting to pay \$10,000 towards local benevolences as their needs are also great during these times. This means that if the Congregation does not step up to help pay for it, we will have to take the funds from our Restricted Accounts. Moreover, we still have budgeted another \$10,000 for local benevolences that we would like to pay before the end of the year as well. We continue to value your support of our ministry in these trying times and ask that you take this into consideration in deciding your pledges for the next year.

## **TO OUR HOUSE: A Different Plan**

The pandemic has changed so many things in our lives. But it has not changed the needs of a vulnerable person who is homeless. TO OUR HOUSE has responded to this ongoing need in our present crisis with many changes in its format.

Many of the sheltering venues were unable to offer their space for shelter. LMLC is one of them. TOH has contracted with the Knights of Columbus to use their hall in Christiansburg for most of the cold weather season. This is located within walking distance from the intake sight. Thus, there is no need for drivers to transport the guests. A shower truck has been rented since there are no showering facilities at the Hall. This constitute an additional cost to the program of \$4000 a month. The program is still in need of volunteers to help staff. Also, there is an ongoing need for laundry services.

LMLC has agreed to provide meals during our usual two weeks of service in November. St Michael Lutheran is also joining this ministry by providing most of the meals the second week. Thus, our week of providing meals is from **Nov 14 evening thru Nov 21 morning**. Often TOH closes community shelters from Thanksgiving Day until the Saturday following. They have elected to keep the hall available to the guests this year during those days. We are working with SMLC to provide a Thanksgiving plan.

Not only is there a need for ongoing meals and laundry, there is an additional need for funds due to the added expenses of hall rental, shower truck, and additional staff to replace the usual volunteers. There will be emails soon that will provide specific options for you to respond to this need.

Wava Vigen

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## **LMLC's Annual Congregational Meeting is Sunday, November 15, 11:30am.**

This meeting will take place electronically by Zoom, and our tasks include the election of 4 new council members, approving the proposed 2021 Ministry Funding Plan, and a vote to revise our Constitution to be in alignment with the ELCA Model Constitution approved at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

All LMLC members will soon receive by mail a copy of the proposed Constitutional amendments; instructions on how to access the Zoom meeting, how to cast votes and how to ask questions in the Zoom platform; and a copy of the 2021 proposed Ministry Funding Plan; plus you will also receive information on council nominees to fill four expired terms.

Members who do not use a computer, tablet or smartphone may also attend this meeting by dial-up on any telephone. This information will be provided in the mailings.



**Welcome New LMLC Member Natalia Mielczarek:** I've lived in Blacksburg for four and a half years and moved here from the University of Iowa in Iowa City for a position at Virginia Tech. I'm an assistant professor in the School of Communication and teach undergraduate and graduate classes in journalism, multimedia storytelling and visual communication. Before returning to the academy, I was a newspaper reporter for 10 years, most of it in Nashville, Tenn. I'm from Poland, and have lived in the U.S. for 25 years. Outside of doing research and teaching, I'm an avid hiker, reader and talker. I also dabble in arts and crafts.

## Christmas Outreach



In the month of **November**, we will kick off fund raising for the **Christmas Outreach Project**. The Christmas Outreach Project provides financial support for families who have children attending **Valley Interfaith Child Care Center (VICCC)**. The goal of VICCC is to provide high quality affordable, educational, and nurturing, care for young children (ages 6 weeks to 5) and now school age childcare, of income eligible working families in the New River Valley. The mission of VICCC is to provide support for the low-income working population of the New River Valley as they strive to become more self-sufficient. There is a significant barrier to low-income parents seeking to participate in the local job market. These parents may be left with a difficult choice. Without childcare, some parents are unable to hold a job, leaving them dependent on public assistance and unable to strive for their family's self-sufficiency. VICCC operates a licensed nonprofit childcare center that provided high quality care at a subsidized price our families can afford. VICCC parents can report to work knowing that their children are in a safe and loving environment where they are following the Covid 19 protocols, they will benefit from a curriculum that stresses literacy, self-esteem, and school readiness as well as nutrition program tailored just for them.

We had extremely successful fundraising effort. In 2019, we raised \$7412.00. We were able to provide \$265 in tuition reimbursement and financial support to 25 low income families whose children attend Valley Interfaith Child Care Center. In addition, we were able to provide cookies, a stuffed animal, and one books for all 50 children who attend the center.

As with everything, VICCC situation has changed in 2020, due to Covid 19, the center has 39 children (instead of the usual 50 children). The staff are required to keep them socially distanced from each other as much as possible. For Christmas Outreach, that means we only have 20 families identified this year to help. But with Covid 19, help is needed as much as ever. The strain of the virus on families is apparent, with some being the only wage earner or others still recovering from being out of work earlier this year. I would like to challenge the congregation to raise **\$7000 this year**. That will allow us to give each family \$300 for tuition reimbursement/financial support, provide three months of books to the center and provide a gift bag to each of the 39 children in the center.

We will take donations through **Sunday December 6th<sup>th</sup>** I would like to thank everyone who continues to support this fund-raising effort. We have two ways to donate this year; you can **mail** in your donation to Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, 600 Prices Fork Rd, Blacksburg VA 24060 (please note that donation is for Christmas Outreach on your check) or you can make a donation thru **PayPal**. The link is [https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted\\_button\\_id=SU8HQBH2JWURN](https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=SU8HQBH2JWURN).

In Peace,

Teresa Cassell



**Thank You LMLC Members:**

For donating **610** cans of pasta or meat to the Christmas Store. Just think how many meals that will be. You guys are very giving. Ron and Elaine Belay



**Fellowship Hall Renovations Continue:**



Close up view of 12" steel I-beams that are anchored in concrete at the bottom and bolted to the steel support for the floor on the second level. A stable grouting material is used to seal the I-beams to the wall.

Nine steel I-beams have been located to stabilize the bulge in that wall that has formed over the years. No steel reinforcement was required within the cement block wall when it was built in 1969, which permitted the shift in this very tall section of wall.



## Lutheran Campus Ministries At Virginia Tech

We ask your prayers for our fall semester! The semester is off to a wonderful start with a full weekly programming. Here's a look at a week at The Well:

**Tuesday Night Gatherings:** Each week, along the same schedule in previous years, The Well gathers via zoom at 7pm for fellowship, learning and worship. We have had Bible Study, Bob Ross Painting Night, a justice issue teach-in, a Netflix Watch Party, and game night...upcoming we'll have a 'Chopped Cooking Challenge' where folks will pick up bags of random ingredients from the campus center and we'll all test our kitchen chops!

**Wednesday Night Socially Distant Worship:** At 6pm we gather with masks and at a safe social distance for a 45-minute service of the Word.

**Wednesday Night Bible Study:** At 7pm we gather over zoom for Bible study. This semester we are following Paul's missionary journey through Acts and his epistles.

**Sunday Night Burning Bush Gatherings:** At 7:30pm on Sundays we are gathering in-person and via zoom around the fire pits in the Lower Lot at LMLC. These gatherings are described as 'an open space for connection and conversation.' Unlike our other programming these gatherings are less structured with the invitation for students to bring their joys, challenges, questions and uncertainties.

God's peace be with you all!

-Alyssa Kaplan

### Nita's Notes – November 2020

Who is a saint? This hymn text written by Lesbia Scott (1898-1986) with its tune composed by John Henry Hopkins (1861-1945) gives us a list of some perhaps unusual examples of saints to consider. Written for her own children, Mrs. Scott ended the final verse with these words, "for the saints of God are just folk like me, and I mean to be one too." Following is a Youtube video of some children singing this hymn and then another of a soloist who included the final verse. You may also learn more about the history of the hymn at the website listed. Although our hymnal does not include "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God" it is a hymn I would like our congregation to sing in the future.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uhjz4lyYSsU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpTI7S1rrPM>

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-i-sing-a-song-of-the-saints-of-god>

I said all of that to say this. November is a significant month of remembering for me, because until Nov 2 of 2016 it had always been birthday month for my mother and we enjoyed many special celebrations throughout the years. However, in that year, it also became the month to remember her passing from this life into eternal rest with the God she knew and loved. My mother was a saint, though definitely not a perfect one!! Her life was an expression of helping others in whatever way presented itself. She taught me, as well as other girls, about caring for others because she lived the calling of missions in her everyday life. When I remember my mother, I remember her smile, and I remember her generosity. I accompanied her to the “rescue mission” where our church shared Christ’s love with the homeless men who gathered there, to a poor family’s home in our community to deliver an entire Thanksgiving meal because she somehow knew of their need, to deliver a huge coffee can filled with homemade Christmas cookies to old man Anderson, a hermit-like farmer across our road, and on and on it goes. As a creative person, mom took her love of quilting and design to the residents in nursing homes and to children, teenagers and the retired ladies of her church. She listened to beautiful classical music and she loved to sing hymns. One of her many favorites is the gospel hymn, “Count Your Blessings.” I can still remember singing it with her in church or hearing her randomly sing it at home. As you listen to the piano arrangement presented this week on the website, I hope you will agree that when we count our blessings, naming them one by one, we will truly see all that God has done!

During this time of our individual and collective remembering of those significant saints who have touched our lives, we join with all of the saints of our fellowship in heaven and on earth in songs of thanksgiving and praise!

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

Joyfully yours,  
Nita

**Lost and Found**, our annual weekend retreat for youth in 7th and 8th grades and their adult advisors, will be DIGITAL this year! The event will take place via Zoom during four blocks of time on **Nov. 20-21, 2020 (Friday 6 PM to Saturday 7:30 PM)**.

For more information and to register for this year's event, visit [vasynod.org/event/lost-and-found](https://vasynod.org/event/lost-and-found)

Since we  
can't gather  
in-person,  
we are hosting ...

**Online**  
**LOST**  
**AND**  
**FOUND**



Follow Luther Memorial on *Instagram*

@luthermemorialblacksburg

**Thursday, November 12, 2020  
7:00-8:30 PM, via ZOOM**



*Talking about death won't kill you!*

Sponsored by

Funeral Consumers  
Alliance of the Virginia  
Blue Ridge

Email  
[fcavbr@gmail.com](mailto:fcavbr@gmail.com) to  
receive the Zoom link

For more Information:  
Find us on Facebook  
and visit our website

[www.fcavbr.org](http://www.fcavbr.org)  
540-953-5589

**What?** *Death Café\** is a global movement that brings people together for lively conversations about death over coffee and tea. Join us for a group-directed and candid discussion on issues

It is a free, all volunteer event, with no political or religious agenda.

**Why?** We don't want to talk about it even though we know everything dies. Together we can ease our fears and breathe life into our conversations about death. Everyone is welcome!

**Who?** The conversation is free; **supply your own treats and beverage.** Email [fcavbr@gmail.com](mailto:fcavbr@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom link.

*\*There have been 11,547 Death Café gatherings in more than 73 countries ([www.deathcafe.com](http://www.deathcafe.com)). Death Café is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counseling session.*



# *HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE BORN IN NOVEMBER*

November 03	<i>Diane Catley Kathy Valencic</i>
November 04	<i>Janet Buss</i>
November 05	<i>Jody Freeman</i>
November 14	<i>Teresa Cassell Cre Hartenstein</i>
November 19	<i>Betty Jo Prater</i>
November 23	<i>Sam Akers Phil Jordan Joe Liversedge</i>
November 25	<i>John Hess</i>
November 27	<i>Mara Knott Erin Peterson</i>
November 28	<i>Marjean Anthony</i>
November 30	<i>Mark Freeman</i>



## *Happy Anniversary*



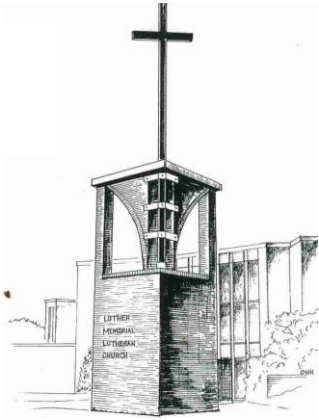
*Mark & Marcia Barrow; November 7th*

*Allen & Louise Price; November 16th*

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church

600 Prices Fork Road

Blacksburg, VA 24060



**STEWARDSHIP NUGGET FOR NOVEMBER 2020**

**“Tithing is not giving; it is bringing.”**

Unknown

