

Happy New Year!

January 2021

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." (Matthew 5:43-44).

All well and good Jesus, but who is my enemy? When Jesus spoke these words, his audience was a group of people living under an oppressive Roman rule. The "enemy" in this case seemed clear: it's the people who have invaded our territory and are telling us how to live and are using cruel and arbitrary punishments to keep us all in line.

In our day and age, it seems less clear. Certainly there are those in the world who might seek to do us bodily harm, but we don't often encounter such people in our everyday lives. Because of that many of us might read this passage and think, "Well, right now that doesn't apply to me. I don't really have any enemies, so I don't have to worry about loving them or praying for them."

But is it as simply as that? Looking around our world today, with all of the anger and animosity that seems to be bubbling just under the surface of civilized society, it seems as though many act as though there are enemies everywhere. What is most disturbing to me is that too often it seems as though many consider anyone with whom they disagree to be a bona fide enemy. Whether it's someone who holds a different political viewpoint, practices a different religion or "flavor" of Christianity, or even just happens to like a different sports team, once an individual is identified as "different" he or she becomes "enemy"

All too often, what this results in is that the person, the individual who has hopes and dreams and joys and sorrows just like you and I do, gets reduced to an ideology or a doctrine, in short, is made less than human. It's easy to spew hatred at "those liberals" or "those conservatives" or "those insert-your-own-enemy-here" when we make them something less than the human beings they are.

So how do we show love for our enemies and those we believe are persecuting us? Right now, in our troubled times, perhaps the best way to show love to an "enemy" is to simply stop and listen to him or her. Hear the stories they have to share, listen to the struggles they face, listen to the reasons they believe what they do. You certainly don't have to agree, but by listening, you can gain understanding, respect, and you can begin to see this "enemy" as simply another human being, made in the image of God just like you are, trying to do his or her best to navigate this crazy world we inhabit.

The same goes for the prayer place. So often when we do begrudgingly pray for those with whom we disagree, our prayers end up saying something to the effect of, "Dear God, please help so-and-so to realize how wrong they are..." Our prayers, however, should be more along the lines of asking God to bless that individual, strengthen them in their own struggles, lead them in paths of righteousness, etc.; in short, the prayer of one's enemies should sound a lot like the prayers we would pray for ourselves and those we love.

Perhaps in doing so, we as Christians, called by Jesus to love our enemies, can begin to defuse some of the anger that's all too pervasive in our world today. It might seem like a small thing, but one act of genuine respect, compassion, or love, could make all the difference to the one to whom it is given. Really, think of the difference it has made to you that Christ showed that respect, compassion and love...for you. What a privilege to be able to turn around and show that same love to others even those with whom we disagree.

Blessings, Pastor Kurt

ANNUAL MEETINGS DATES

Scheie Lutheran Church - January 17th after service.

If cancelled due to weather or the pandemic it will be on January 24th.

Big Canoe Lutheran Church - January 31st after service.

If cancelled due to weather or the pandemic it will be on February 14th.

Highland Lutheran Church - February 7th after service.

If cancelled due to weather or the pandemic it will be on February 21st.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

MEETING

Saturday January 9, 2021 at 2 p.m.

If there is inclement weather, we will meet on January 16 at 2 p.m.

The Council will be working on the proposed budget for 2021.

The Memories of Big Canoe book is now available. Contact:

Sandy Gavle 563-546-7912 thegavles@gmail.com or Sue Darling 563-735-5707 suedarling9@yahoo.com

Cost is \$18.00, will ship for an additional cost of \$3.50 to \$6.00 depending on zip code.

Make checks payable to Big Canoe Social Concerns.

Total quilt donations for 2020

8 to Quilts Helping Services	Jenny Wedman Benefit – 1	MBTC Mission Cresco-8
Brenda Falck Benefit – 1	Graduation gifts – 3	Des Moines Fire Victims – 5
Homeless shelter in Cedar Rapids – 18	Pine Ridge Indian Reservation – 18	Allamakee Relief Office – 8
Task – 6	Lap robes to Nursing homes – 44	LWR 112 and 88 school kits!

Not bad considering we couldn't get together as often because of Covid.

Scheie Council Meeting – December 13, 2020

The December 13, 2020 Scheie Council meeting was held in the church basement with the following in attendance: Pastor Kurt, Robert, Rodney, Deb, Carol, Carolyn, Chuck, and Mark. Absent: Dee, Ellie, and Mollie

The meeting was called to order by Robert. Pastor Kurt opened with a prayer. Secretary's report was read and approved. The Treasure report was reviewed. The usual bills were paid for the month. The money from the sale of the parsonage is now into Thrivent accounts. See November notes for details. Checks are available if money is needed out of the account(s).

Old business:

- 1) Nominating committee for this coming year are Mark Spande, Bob Stoskopf, and Nancy/ Dick Engrav. The committee has met.
- 2) Update regarding church services. Feel that with our attendance we are able to continue in person. Discussed in detail Christmas Eve services. Will use tape areas off prior to service and will need ushers to insure we are socially distancing. Could use the basement and Sunday School room if needed. Will hand out bulletins, candles, communion supplies, and write names down for contact tracing. Carol mentioned possibly taping so that service could be downloaded and be viewed later. With no WIFI, we can't have view it live. Council members can act as ushers. May need to usher people out of church with people in the back pews leaving first. Will need to sanitize the candles for Big Canoe to use after our service.
- 3) Update on joint meeting with Big Canoe 45%, Highland 25%, and Scheie 30%. See handouts for details. Also, we will begin to alternate church times monthly with the exception that we may have to switch times for the annual meetings. Also looking like we will be able to have a year contract beginning in April since we are currently contracted through March 2021.

- 4) STS had been out to check the hot water heater. May be the thermostat or the reset button. Matt had been out to check.
- 5) No in person church on Dec. 27 and Jan 3. May watch online.

New Business

- 1) Upcoming events:
 - a) January council meeting/budget meeting January 10th. Need reports prior to meeting.
 - b) January 17th annual meeting. If needed to be canceled, will reschedule to the 24th. A motion was made by Carol and seconded by Carolyn to schedule the annual meeting for January 17th with backup date January 24th. Motion carried. Will have the Big Canoe secretary print up the annual meeting. Pastor Kurt will have the copies of the constitution to be handed out.
- 2) Paper work from years ago - Phyllis Viegland had papers from years ago. It was decided that we could put it in the safe.
- 3) Air purifier - Bill Stoen is a dealer for air purifiers. Tabled but after discussion, probably not interested.
- 4) Review of constitution articles 9 through 11 next meeting. tabled till the next meeting. It will take 2 years to accept. This year, the Constitution will be given to the congregation and next year it will be reviewed again and accepted or denied.

Motion by Deb and seconded by Rodney to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned. Closed with Lord's prayer.

Joint Council Meeting – December 10, 2020 - 7:00 pm

Representatives from Big Canoe, Highland and Scheie Lutheran all in attendance.

The Joint Council meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Pastor Bockoven opened with a prayer. The minutes of September joint meeting were approved.

Pastoral Report: The Pastor reports that he helped a couple of non-member burials recently. There are 25 reported openings in the Northeast Iowa Synod right now for Pastors/Calls. Many pastors have gone south for the winter already, and many are wary to help for supply pastors with the COVID pandemic and PHE. Supple Pastors are very hard for him to find if needed. Pastor reports that Decorah Lutheran, Canoe Ridge and our parish are the only ones right now holding in person services. Confirmation has now gone virtual via Zoom for 1 hour only on the **Wednesday schedule**. Bill asks regarding any calls since many are shut-in at this time. Pastor reports many Zoom conferences and meetings with other Pastors. It is hard to get cell phone numbers for Pastor and this will be worked on and a request put in the newsletter. Parsonage work is done. The Depot Outlet in Decorah did give grant to help with expenses and we thank them for that. Danny D. did some fixing with the water heater and outdoor lighting at the Parsonage and we thank him for that. The windows were installed that were previously bought. Sidewalk and expenses for steps and patio will be in the spring and noted for expense in upcoming Annual Meeting budget.

New Business: Newsletter prices have been increasing and are almost double. Bill talked to Anunsen's and prices hadn't increased much per them, it would just be the increasing pages and or copies being made. We are mailing 334 newsletters right now. Work needs to be done to clean up the listing and addresses of those receiving the letter and also on those that might wish to receive the newsletter via email instead. Pastor reminds for all those with Newsletter items to be sending it to the bchlutheran@gmail.com email address. Pastor will call Anundsen's on pricing information. Discussion was also had on adding the newsletter in a shorter version to the website. Danny made a motion that we check into the posting on the website privacy rules and also the email offering of the newsletter to cost on some costs.

Discussion was had regarding the three churches and communion times. Anna brought up the ease of having communion all on the same Sundays for the ease of the Pastor and bulletin prepping. It was decided that communion would be held the 1st and last Sunday of the month for all three churches. This was brought up by Anna and seconded by Carol and all passed and approved.

At this time the joint budget was discussed in closed meeting without the Pastor present. All amounts and changes were discussed and approved. Danny made a motion to have the entire budget split excluding the Parsonage and Farm expense. This will eliminate separate billing and keep to the set percentages for each church. This was approved.

In person services were discussed, we are set to have services until the Sunday after Christmas. This is set to be virtual and also it was decided that Jan 3rd would also be virtual to be two weeks out after Christmas for any possible exposures to the Covid virus.

Meeting was adjourned and the Lord's Prayer was said.

Respectfully submitted, Amanda Stortz, Secretary, Big Canoe Lutheran

Big Canoe Lutheran Church Council Meeting – December 17, 2020 6:30 pm

The meeting was called to order. The Secretary's report was read and approved. The Treasurer reported a balance of \$4052.50. We are behind in Benevolence sent out. Laurie reports many of the set Benevolences either have no submission or only close to half. It was decided after discussion and review that Laurie would raise the Synod benevolence to at least half which is \$1000 (total budgeted \$2000) with all monies taken in the rest of the month and around Christmas. Any other benevolence may be allocated to the others at Laurie's discretion. It is better to be able to give some than give none. The Treasurer's report is approved.

Pastoral Report: The Parsonage dishwasher repair will be taken care of next week. Pastor reports that Danny D. placed a large star in the yard at the Parsonage for the season. Pastor held the Zoom confirmation. He has ordered led candles for Big Canoe and Scheie to split cost for the Christmas Eve services that they each have. These will be disinfected between churches for use. This is instead of the candles that each member blows out for safety purposes. Pastor will be taping the service for the Jan 3rd date. Pastor Bockoven also notes that he did spend \$200 recently on licensing for streaming and copyright for posting music and the readings online. This will be split.

Christmas Eve Service was discussed and Pastor will need help with handing out the candles, the bulletins, and then the communion sets as well as reading. Volunteers were noted. Cards for the members that are shut-in were all signed by the council members and will be sent. Bonuses were discussed and decided upon and given to Kathryn, Phyllis, Bob and Pastor for the tedious and different work done this past year in and out of the pandemic.

The Newsletter was discussed and prices were quoted from Luther College, Copyland and Anundsen's. Luther College was a good savings at around \$93 compared to Anundsen's right now at over \$200 a month. It was decided that starting in February we would send to Luther College for printing the newsletter. This can always be addressed again if needed or if any issues arise.

The meeting was adjourned and the Lord's Prayer was said in unison. The next meeting is set for January 14th at 6:30 pm to finalize all budgets before the annual meeting January 31st.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Stortz, Secretary