

The Star of Bethlehem



August 2020

Prayer For A Season Of Pandemic

A few weeks ago, on Saturdays I began sending out a weekly prayer via phone blast. This is something I plan on doing for the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, the phone message service only allows thirty seconds for the prayer (or any message, for that matter). In a sense, that may be a blessing because I am forced to keep the prayers concise and focused. However, as COVID-19 continues to rage on, I have decided, for the purposes of this month's article, to write out a prayer specifically related to our current season of pandemic. The prayer is longer than thirty seconds, but it is still concise and focused. Perhaps you will pray this prayer with me or even look up the Bible passages I have included with each petition.

Would you please pray with me:

O Lord Jesus Christ,

You went throughout every town and village (Luke 8:1), healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people (Mt. 4:23), and all saw the miracles which You did on them that were diseased (John 6:2).

Make haste, we cry to You oh Lord, to help us (Ps. 37:22), for the disease is severe in our land (Gen. 12:10). Save the world from unbelief and the proud times, that all the earth may be refreshed and may hope for the judgment and mercy of Him Who made her (Is. 55: 9-11).

Give the sick remedy to prolong life. May they obtain Your help and recover (Is. 38:9), may all who wait for the Lord gain new strength (Is. 40:31).

Remember in Your Kingdom (Luke 23:42) the departed from this world. For You, oh Lord, are the resurrection and the life (John 11:25). May all who believe in You (John 14:1) inherit eternal life.

Manifest to those who cry for the dead the love which surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:19), and protect us from disaster and despair, so that all might have hope through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures (Rom. 15:4)

Offer Your help to doctors, nurses, and scientists, for from You comes healing (Is. 58:8; Mt. 9:35). Let Your peace cover all the earth (Lk. 2:14).

Abide with those who govern the world (1 Tim. 2:2, Rom. 13:1) and fill with wisdom those who have power over nations, to care for the well-being of citizens and to serve those in need.

Do not leave us when we are in our homes and on the streets, on journeys and in dangers (2 Cor. 11:26) compassed by many with the sorrows of death (Ps. 116:3).

Stay with us (Luke 24:29), oh Lord Jesus, our Healer (Ex. 15:26), and we will find rest for our souls (Mt. 11:29), for You live and reign now and ever. Amen.

**May our Lord's peace and protection be with you all,
Pastor Dana Allen Brones**

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August Birthdays & Anniversaries

1 David & Janine Thiemann	18 Cain Winter
4 Remington Heilig	19 Karen Wilhelm
5 John Oberheu & Lucy	21 Christopher Junk
5 Kaleb Quade	21 Kathy Lawler
5 Kyle Wilhelm	21 Stephen Reed
6 Harry Baum	22 Elijah Bennett
6 Michael Gregor	22 Anna-lise DeLos Santos
6 Amberleigh Usher	22 Julio Gundian
8 Micah Alenduff	22 Julio & Julie Gundian
8 Edward Boyajian	22 Kristine Gundian
8 Barbara Cooper	22 Lois Klein
8 Marianne Johnson	22 Darlene Maxwell
8 Braden & Amanda Radtke	23 Laurie Brauer
8 Shannon Roberts	24 Russ & Beverly Furtick
8 Dan & Alanna Tostovarsnik	25 Brenda Johnson
9 Jeff Parsons	25 Shirley Kirkman
10 Don Arthur	26 Robert & Brenda Murray
10 Patricia Burgains	27 Robert & Polly Navarro
10 Saralyn Crafton	28 Wes Kuehlthau
11 Dennis LaForty	29 Ryott De Los Santos
11 Jean Roman	29 James George
12 Donald Adkison	29 MaryAnn Lawrence
12 Billy & Darlene Maxwell	29 Marc Matteson
12 John & Kathy Poe	29 Lynn McGiveron
13 Molly Clawson	29 Rob Wortelboer
13 Paul Winter	30- Margie & Barry Buerkle
14 Stephanie Peacock	30 Kimberly Cotea
14 Matthew Smith	30 Brian & Teri Kientz
15 Isaiah Harrison	30 Arlene Lorenz
15 Joe McHan & Jana	31 Jeff & Joan Carr
15 Hugo & Beatrice Pearson	31 Diana Clawson
15 Katey Wert	31 Riley Hunter
16 Al Clawson	31 John & Karen Woodsmall
18 Judie Knudtson	
18 Logan Skorusa	

Stewardship

	June 2019	June 2020
Monthly Totals:	\$60,421.69	\$45,908.57
Restricted:	2,130.75	1,803.00
YTD Totals:	\$341,874.20	\$346,005.29
	\$31,537.69	\$31,554.77

June Attendance

Date	8 am	9:30 am	11am	Total
June 9, 2019	53	75	82	210
June 7, 2020	37	39	36	112
June 16, 2019	78	87	113	278
June 14, 2020	46	53	49	148
June 23, 2019	89	74	70	233
June 21, 2020	42	59	39	140
June 30, 2019				145
June 28, 2020	32	46	43	121

SENIOR GAME DAY Hand and Foot

Monday, August 3

Disciples Hall at 9:15 am

Talk with MaryAnn Lawrence 708-9492

Please wear your mask

"All" Young Adults

are invited to like our "BLC Young Adults" Facebook page for regular opportunities to grow as Christians in the complex world around us. Talk with Pastor Nate for more information.



Amazon donates to Bethlehem Lutheran Church when you shop at smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7061413. Thank you for your support!

If you would like to volunteer:

Screens—Romaine Moore @ 422-2881
Altar—Val Gruhn @ 536-2912
8 am greeters—Anna Arno @ 223-1766
9:30 greeters—Joan Richards @ 463-6703
11 am greeters—Jean Shimp @ 249-2040
BFF—Holly Dellinger @ 349-6059

Schedule for August

	Screens	Altar	Elders
<u>Aug 2</u>	8 am Pat 9:30 am Brenda 11 am Gina	Tami	Susan Brenda Bonnie
<u>Aug 9</u>	8 am Val 9:30 am Avery 11 am Angela	Jenn	Val Tami Diana
<u>Aug 16</u>	8 am Sam 9:30 am Tami 11 am Carol	Anna	Susan Barbara Kathy
<u>Aug 23</u>	8 am Val 9:30 am Landon 11 am Toni	Carol	Val Val Beth
<u>Aug 30</u>	8 am Pat 9:30 am Candice 11 am Carol	Susan	Susan Brenda Carol

Jamie & AJ
Bernie & Dennis
Dennis &
Paul & AJ
Bernie & Alex
Bruce & John
Paul & Gordon
Bernie & John
Alex & Bruce
Paul & Gordon
Bernie & Bruce
John & Al
Jamie & AJ
Bernie & Al
Alex & John

Summertime and the Livin' Is ... Angry?

I don't know about you, but I'm not immune to the summertime trend toward increased irritability during the hotter months of the year. Statistically, it happens to most of us. The hotter it is, the more likely we are to be uncomfortable. The more uncomfortable we are, the shorter our fuse. No doubt this is especially true this year, because of, well, *everything*. Everything 2020 has brought our way. I'll admit, sometimes I just look out at the world and think, "Boy, it's a powder keg out there." As I write this (mid-July for the August newsletter) that's certainly how it appears!

Anger is one of those sins that almost all of us inherited from Adam and Eve. It's a rare bird indeed who can claim it's not buried somewhere deep inside their old sinful nature. We just can't seem to get away from it. Luther told the story of a monk, who, even in the super spiritual, seemingly peaceful environment of a *monastery*, kept finding his ire raised by his pesky monastery pals:

"Overcome by his own contrariness and impatience, he left the monastery and withdrew to a deserted spot. There he hoped to live in peace, untouched by offense and sin. Now he happened to go to a spring to fetch some water in a jug and inadvertently overturned the jug, which he had filled with too much water. In anger he flung it to the ground and broke it. When he regained control of himself, he acknowledged that it had not been the fault of the people with whom he had lived that he had so often been moved to anger, but the fault of his own nature and flesh, which were inclined to anger."

Sound familiar? The fault was not external. The fault was internal. In the flesh. In Galatians 5, Paul writes, "Now the works of the flesh are evident." And then he names some of them. And guess what? "Fits of anger" is right there among them. Those works of the flesh. Those things that are hard to shake.

But guess what else? You're not just that ol' sinful nature. You're also a new man, a new woman, in Christ! You've been baptized into Christ. You have Christ's own righteousness! This month, when fits of anger come about, hydrate! Dump the water of your baptism right on top of that anger! Drown that angry old Adam with the promise of God in your baptism. You have new life! You're not tied to the old angry ways. You know of a better way.

Only Jesus and the forgiveness found in His baptism can conquer anger completely. But now that we have that forgiveness, we can also make smart choices in how we deal with anger. Christians, *in your homes*, speak words of absolution to each other. Hydrate each other with Christ's Word of forgiveness. But do other things, too. Count to ten before responding. (Seriously, this is highly effective. Try it!) Why do we think everything must be said immediately? Words and actions can almost *always* wait till heads are cooled. Or try getting some exercise when you feel the anger mounting. Or set goals to eat better. Sleep better. (I'm serious!) Your *chief* weapon in burying the ol' rascal of Anger is the forgiveness Christ gives in your baptism, but these other things are great too. Let's use all we've got.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Nathan

Change

There were a small handful of tiny seeds (about 50), brown and dry and crispy hard. They could have just fallen and no one would even know that they ever existed. But they didn't fall because they were set to soak overnight hopefully to awaken. Awaken they did. The next day a tiny little trench less than 2 inches deep was carved out of the ground, moistened and received the seeds which were then covered over and left to the elements. Being that it is summer, the elements were warm and friendly to the tiny little seeds in the ground. In about 5 days little tiny shoots of green began to push their way up through the earth. Each day the shoots became bigger and stronger and leaves formed. Soon the shape of the leaves changed from the baby leaves to full on leaves of Morning Glory plants; the tiny shoots became 3 and then 6 inches high and are now reaching for the trellis upon which they will climb to become full on flowers by the end of summer and all through out the autumn. As winter arrives they will return to sleep and reawaken next spring to begin the cycle again. Quite a dramatic series of changes! If these changes had not taken place, all would have died and there would be no Morning Glories.

We are living in a very weird time which requires many changes on our parts. Change is not always easy; mostly not easy, but required in order to grow and survive. "In spite of illness, in spite of sorrow, one can remain alive long past the usual date of disintegration if one is unafraid of change." Edith Wharton. Staying home, wearing a mask, not having choir rehearsals and performances, not having dinner parties – these are not fun, but these are changes necessary right now. Work situations are going to change, and schools – oh my, what are we doing about that????

Returning to the Morning Glories, which are my daughter's project, I am called to observe my own self how very positive change can be, no, is, as I observe my own garden which I now enjoy every day since this goofy time began. Things change daily and I find become more beautiful. Plants grow wild and out of control and I am loving them and then they are cut back – a radical change – and I am horrified only to see that very soon they have become more beautiful than they were before. Little plants change into magnificent tomato plants, a little potted plant suddenly has five Meyer lemons on it.

I hope (positive expectation) that we as a human race can perform the changes necessary to make the planet a better place and the human race more kindly and caring. "Nothing endures but change" – Heraclitus 540 – 480 BC. So you see this is not a new concept, but rather one we are still trying to learn.

I personally am looking forward to the many changes we will be experiencing over the coming months (and years). I am also hoping to see some things return, like choir and hugging and playing music for people and with people.

I am reminded of the prayer which my sister and I recited every night at bedtime:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference".

God Bless you all. In His service and yours,
Kathleen, Minister of Music and Mirth



***Welcome our new Vicar, Andrew
and family***

August 9th

8 am installation

To-Go-(or stay)-Luncheon

After the 11 am service

**Like us on Facebook
for the latest in news,
photos and fun!**

Safe and Secure Online Tips

Websites

Make sure you see "https" (not just http) in the URL. The "S" is important as that means the site is secure and your information is encrypted.

Passwords

Create strong, unique passwords on every site using a combination of letters, characters, and symbols. Use two-factor authentication when offered and do not re-use passwords.

Safe Search

If you "Google" a store or product, double check the URL in the results before you click. Or type in the URL instead of clicking a link in search results.

Credit Cards

Use a credit card, not a debit card. If your account is compromised, you have more fraud protection with a credit card than debit. Don't store your card number on the site.

Links

NEVER click on an advertisement for a product that you received in an email or see on social media. Instead, go directly to the store's website and search for the special.

WiFi

Never shop on open WiFi. Ensure you are on a trusted internet connection before shopping and making purchases.

More info visit www.safeandsecureonline.org

**2020-2021 Confirmation Classes will be starting for the
7th and 8th Grade in September.**

**If you have a child or grandchild you would like to attend, please call
the office or talk with Pastor Brones or Pastor McCarty.**

**Picture Directory is available
at no charge.**

Contact the church office.

**Pictures are still welcome, just email to
tami@bethlehemlutheranjaxbeach.org**

Mission House

Request for all worshippers: We need Mission House help every 3rd Friday. 6:00 to 7:30 PM feeding the hungry and poor. They are always in need of your hotel shampoo and small soaps. A basket has been placed in the narthex. 800 Shetter Avenue, Jacksonville Beach. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.



I just got a phone call. I was disinclined to answer it, as I was deep into my new Pauline tent-making-mission-supporting venture, building websites, seeing that I can no longer support myself as a missionary in the manner to which I was formerly accustomed, namely, large groups of people gathering freely. Now we have to use our freedom to gather responsibly. Ugh. Freedom **and** responsibility?

But this call was from my pastor. I suppose you could call it a 'robo-call', but it was not like one of *those*. This one was holy. He asked me to pray with him and like a good Minnesotan I said, "Oshoor!" (which, translated, means "Oh, sure!"). He made reference to John 4:23-24, where Jesus throws his penultimate pitch to the Samaritan woman at the well, who seemed to think Jesus was getting uncomfortably close and was attempting to fend him off with a religious culture war argument about which mountain possessed the only true worship of God, Jerusalem or Samara. This was a pure 'God vs. the Devil' argument and was certain to immediately inflame any God-fearing Jew like this strange man who had asked her to defile himself by passing him a glass of water. (Samaritans are unclean and to be assiduously avoided, according to the Jewish teachers. Talk about social distancing!)

Jesus does not jump to the defensive, but says, 'None of the above. There is a different Way that supersedes both of those alternatives, and He is standing before you now, speaking with you'. That's a 'living' translation, but I think I've got the gist of it.

After the 'Amen' (actually I did it *while* he was praying – sorry, Pastor), I looked it up in my e-Bible, Olive Tree, which was open to the For Everyone commentary, and I found this story from scholar N. T. Wright:

"A friend of mine described the reaction when he went home, as a young teenager, and announced to his mother that he'd become a Christian. Alarmed, she thought he'd joined some kind of cult. 'They've brainwashed you!' she said.

He was ready with the right answer.

'If you'd seen what was in my brain,' he replied, 'you'd realize it needed washing!' Of course, he hadn't been brainwashed. In fact, again and again – and this was certainly the case with my friend – when people bring their lives, their outer lives and inner lives, into the light of Jesus the Messiah, things begin to come clear.

If anything, **it's our surrounding culture that brainwashes us, persuading us in a thousand subtle ways that the present world is the only one there is. This is seldom argued. Rather, a mood is created in which it seems so much easier to go with the flow.** (*emphasis mine*) That's what happens in brainwashing. What the gospel does is to administer a sharp jolt, to shine a bright light, to kick-start the brain, and the moral sensibility, into working properly for the first time."

Jesus was getting uncomfortably close. Now this talk of worshipping without a temple building? How will that work? That's not *how* things work. Who *is* this guy? She waves him off with a curt reply that signals the end of the conversation: "When Messiah comes, he will sort this all out." But the conversation is just beginning.

"I AM. The One speaking to you." A sharp jolt. A bright light. A kick-start to the brain, and once the focus is on this Man and off her cultural certainties and defenses, all is clear, or at least clearing, dawning. She runs back to town as an evangelist and brings them all out to Jesus, that they, too, might see clearly for the first time.

I'm guessing she never again indulged in any good old Jew vs. Samaritan bickering. Or if she slipped, I like to think she caught herself, saying, "No, not that. Rather Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, my brothers and sisters in the Messiah."

Dave Horn

Altar Flowers

You can remember or mark a special occasion with Altar Flowers? Each of the beautiful arrangements are \$30 per vase and a sign-up sheet for each Sunday of the year is in the Narthex. This is a great way to acknowledge a birthday, anniversary, and to remember a loved one who has gone before. You can choose to take them home with you after the 11 am service or mark for them to be delivered to a home-bound congregant or someone in the hospital. Please put your donation in the offering plate and mark it for altar flowers or mail it to the church.



Online Worship-Live Stream

We will be live streaming our traditional Worship Service at 11 am every Sunday on the BLC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BethlehemLutheranChurchandPreschool) and our 9:30 Family Service on the BLC Periscope site <https://www.periscope.tv>

Sunday services will still be available in the afternoon on YouTube (www.YouTube.com) Search for; Bethlehem Lutheran Church Jax Beach

To reach new BLC Services on Periscope; Download the app or go on desktop to <https://www.periscope.tv> Select Sign Up to create a free account, Search for Bethlehem Lutheran Church Jax Beach. Join us!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Pr. Nate Out of Office						
Eighth S. a. Pentecost			10am - Private Communion 11am - Staff Meeting @ 7pm - Adult Bible Study @			10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
Mites Sunday						
8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Contemporary Worship 11am - Liturgical Worship w/						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pr. Nate Out of Office						
Ninth S. a. Pentecost	9:30am - Senior Game Day @ 4:30pm - Vicar arrives		10am - Private Communion 11am - Staff Meeting @ 7pm - Adult Bible Study @			10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
8am - Liturgical Worship @ 8am - Vicar Installation 9:30am - Contemporary Worship 11am - Liturgical Worship w/ 12:15pm - Vicar Luncheon						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Tenth S. a. Pentecost		7pm - Elder's Meeting @	10am - Private Communion 11am - Staff Meeting @ 7pm - Adult Bible Study @			Assumption of Mary 10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
8am - Liturgical Worship @ 8am - Vicar Installation 9:30am - Contemporary Worship 11am - Liturgical Worship w/ 12:15pm - Vicar Luncheon						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Eleventh S. a. Pentecost			10am - Private Communion 11am - Staff Meeting @ 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	9am - Circuit Pastor's	6pm - BLC supports Mission	10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
Feed My Sheep Sunday @ 8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Contemporary Worship 11am - Liturgical Worship w/						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Mites Sunday		7pm - Executive Council Meeting	10am - Private Communion 11am - Staff Meeting @ 7pm - Adult Bible Study @			10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
Twelfth S. a. Pentecost						
8am - Donut Sunday @ Disciples' 8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Contemporary Worship 11am - Liturgical Worship w/						
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Thirteenth S. a. Pentecost			10am - Private Communion 11am - Staff Meeting @ 7pm - Adult Bible Study @	9:15am - Prayer Group @ 9:30am - Bible Study @ Cottage		10am - Praise Team Rehearsal @
8am - Liturgical Worship @ 9:30am - Contemporary Worship 11am - Liturgical Worship w/						