



Last month I mentioned in church that our national church's convention had passed a resolution declaring the ELCA a sanctuary church. I noted that we might have different feelings/ideas about this action, but that I personally was not excited about it. I want to talk about that a little bit.

First of all, there are some positive things about this decision. I'll note a few things from a list of talking points that the ELCA sent to pastors and posted on its website.

- *"We have a broken system regarding immigration, refugees and asylum-seekers. To declare ourselves a sanctuary church body is to say that we seek to provide concrete resources to assist the most vulnerable who are feeling the sharp edges of this broken system."* To care for the immigrant is a consistent Biblical mandate. This grows out of God calling Abram's family out of his home in Ur to "a place that I will show you." To care for "widows, sojourners (immigrants) and orphans" is mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament. We do well when we desire the good of immigrants. I think it's also clear that our immigration system is not functioning smoothly right now, (people have different explanations for why,) and immigrants are suffering. This problem goes far beyond America. There is something about how technology has made the world smaller that makes large scale immigration both possible and problematic.

- October 2019

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- *"While we may have different ideas about how to fix this broken system and may have different ways of loving our neighbors, our call to love our neighbor is central to our faith."* I appreciate that the difference of opinion is respectfully acknowledged here. And yes, loving our neighbor is central to our faith. "But who is our neighbor" we might ask? And in so asking maybe feel a jolt of recognition (Luke 10:25-37).
- *"Through the AMMPARO strategy, we are also working through our global partners in Central America to alleviate the conditions that cause people to migrate."* I think it is wise to not only address the symptoms, but the causes of out of control immigration. I'm glad that the ELCA is doing this not just by making a public statement, but by working with people in Central America.
- *"Welcoming people is not a political issue for us, it is a matter of faith."* I am glad that Presiding Bishop Eaton does not want to frame this as a political issue.

The Declaration of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly that we are a sanctuary church testifies in important ways to the truth. I hope that I am stating that clearly.

But I also find it galling. Realistically speaking, in our current climate, this IS a political issue and has been and will be perceived as such. Americans are deeply divided, so are Lutherans. Various cities have declared themselves sanctuary cities and California even passed a law declaring itself a sanctuary state; these have often been done in explicit opposition to the president. In the other direction, some states have passed laws banning sanctuary cities. Declaring ourselves a sanctuary church can't help but be a political statement.

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On a personal note, I'm politically conservative. But I'm a pastor, not a politician. I don't want anyone in the pews to have reason to say, "He's a pastor to people who agree with him, but not to me." The gospel is for each and every one of you and it makes no distinction whatsoever based on politics. I always try to make it clear that good people can disagree. And as I noted above, the talking points that Presiding Bishop Eaton sent out try to do the same thing, "we may have different ideas..." But as a conservative person I can't help but feel that the Church is taking one side. And it's galling to me. I want the Church to be on my side too. I want to feel as though the voices of people like me are heard and respected.

From my perspective, the uncertainty of the situation is exacerbating the suffering. Large numbers of people are seeking asylum because our political situation suggests that it might work. And along the way many are abused by those whom they've paid to bring them across the border. The chaos of the situation is enabling human trafficking, the abuse of workers, the selling of children. I want the law to be applied firmly and predictably. The fight over policy, the refusal of some places to cooperate with ICE, the selective application of the law, all of these things are making the suffering worse, that's what I see. And I would rather that the church found a way to support refugees and immigrants in a way that didn't contribute to the culture's divisiveness and our church's own division.

Now, I might be wrong about any number of things, but I am acting in accord with the promises I made when I was ordained. I desire good things for immigrants; I want a robust witness of the church for them as scripture demands, but also for unity in the church as scripture also demands. I guess that I'm writing this down not to convince you of anything except my desire for us to love and respect one another and to care for and respect our Church just as it should respect and appreciate the faithful voices which make their home within it.

I'm always very happy to talk about these things. If anything that I've said has rankled, I'd be happy to talk about it with you. We need each other, after all.

Rev. Ben Worley  
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**Emanuel-St John Lutheran  
Church  
Council Meeting Minutes  
September 12, 2019**

President Brian Lantz called the meeting to order. Present were Pastor Ben, Cindy Souder, Jeff Ellerbrock, Rhonda Johnson, Kari Lantz, Colleen Arndt, Pauline Lange, Jo Grodahl, Randy Souder, Karen Cerra, Barb Hedin and Dennis Hedin. Pastor Ben gave devotions. Motion by Jo Grodahl, second by Kari Lantz to approve the agenda. Motion passed. Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock, second by Karen Cerra to approve the August minutes. Motion passed. Rhonda Johnson presented the August Treasurer's report with a balance is \$3307.87. Motion by Colleen Arndt, second by Jo Grodahl to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

**Old Business:** None.

**President's Report:** Brian Lantz is working on ideas to raise money for the north side of the church parking area. More bats have been found in the church. Brian will call the exterminator. The Property Management Committee is looking into getting bids for replacement of furnaces. A Risk Improvement Report from the church insurance carrier will be sent to church.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Ben reported that four new members will be joining the church after they attend classes. Confirmation Recharge is November 8-10. Five students and Pastor Ben would like to attend. Motion by Jo Grodahl, second by Kari Lantz to have the students pay the down payment of \$30.00 and the balance to be paid by the church. Pastor Ben will be allowed to take the students to recharge. Motion passed. Pastor Ben will be doing services at the Sunny Knoll Care Centre in Rockwell City once a month on Monday afternoon. Whitney (Glasnapp) Dungey will be transferring to a church where she lives.

**Worship and Music Committee:** Barb Hedin present. She reported that October 13 will be Mission Sunday. Kim Dickey from Global Health Ministries will be speaking. Outreach Committee is in charge of organizing the meal. Motion by Jo Grodahl, second by Colleen Arndt to cancel services on Saturday, October 12. Motion passed.

**Parish Ed Committee:** Kari Lantz present. Kari reported that the 4th graders received Bibles. Second and third graders will be using the same bible in Sunday School classes to become familiar with it. School Kits is the Mission Outreach that the Sunday School is currently doing. If anyone has ideas for a Christmas program please share with the committee. Sunday School Newsletter is being sent once a month to let parents know what is happening.

**Outreach Committee:** Colleen Arndt present. Committee is working on the Mission Festival potluck. Information will be in the newsletter. Fire Prevention Week is the week of October 14th and the committee is planning on giving cookies to the Lytton Fire Department for saying thanks to the people who serve as firefighters. The committee is planning on not doing the Good Gifts at Christmas time this year, but instead taking donations for Lutheran Social Services financial help for Foster Kids. Money given will go towards winter coats, mittens, hats, boots etc. for children in the foster care program.

**Property and Management Committee:** No one present.

**Stewardship and Finance Committee:** Jeff Ellerbrock and Randy Souder present. A letter was received from the Lytton Emergency Committee to give funds to support a new building. Endowment Committee will be using funds for the renewal of the Lutheran Magazine. A sign up for church members to continue receiving this magazine will be done. Jeff reported that some CD's will be due before the end of the year. Council needs to decide how to proceed with them

**WELCA:** Kari Lantz reported that the "Soles 4 Souls" program has started.

**New Business:** Brian Lantz still working on a church fun night. Council discussed the youth program, nothing is organized at this time.

Motion by Jeff Ellerbrock second by Kari Lantz to adjourn. Motion passed. Lord's Prayer.



## Farewell

Whitney Glasnapp Dungey recently transferred her church membership to Messiah Lutheran Church, Janesville, IA

We pray that God will continue to bless her in her new church home!

## October Birthdays

- 2) Sheila Toms
- 3) Jeff Ellerbrock
- 4) Jean Matter, Jax Purdie
- 5) Ella Adams
- 6) Karen Cerra, David Hutchens
- 8) Cortney Diersen
- 9) Doneta Linqvist
- 10) Theodore Albright
- 11) Donovan Kennebeck
- 12) Steven McKinney
- 13) Bruce Byriel, Cody Lanning, Cindy Souder
- 14) Michael Sage
- 15) Grant Grodahl
- 16) Nolan Huddleson, Jenna Jensen
- 17) Ron Maulsby, Rodney Rix, David Sands, Julie Wilson
- 19) Kristin Bailey, JoAnn Ellerbrock, Debbie Otto
- 20) Chris Souder
- 21) Dorothy Wilson
- 22) Mindy Riley
- 23) Amy Diersen, Barbara Hedin, Don Wilson
- 24) Nelma Byriel
- 25) Daniel Kennebeck, Gary Manning, Adelaide Worley
- 27) Jake Ackerson, Sam Adams, Emily Bailey, Morgan Hillmer, Marlyn Purdie
- 28) Dennis Johnson
- 29) Brittany Garcia, Paul Toms
- 30) Earl Bartels, Matthew Gibson, Daryl Glasnapp, Kari Lantz



- 10/05/1996 Bob & Jodi Purdie  
10/14/2012 Christopher & Angela Ramsey  
10/29/2005 Mark & Angela Edmondson

## Anniversaries



Join us for Mission Festival Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup>!  
Noon potluck following worship service.



## IT'S A BOY!

Cory and Jamie Waller became the parents of a baby boy, Kacen Meyer Waller, on Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. Kacen was born at St. Anthony's Hospital in Carroll. He weighed 7 lbs. 13 oz. and measured 20 1/5 inches long.

Kacen is the grandson of Alan and Carol Meyer and great-grandson of Ron and Marlene Meyer.

**Congratulations and God's blessings to this new family!**



Emily Scharn and Kaleb Roth were united in marriage at Emanuel-St. John Lutheran Church on Saturday, September 21, 2019.

**Congratulations, Emily and Kaleb!**



### **Warming Hearts with God's Love and a Good Pair of Mittens**

Far too often, children arrive at LSI's Beloit and Bremwood Residential Treatment Centers with very little in their possession.

We give thanks for Iowa congregations who faithfully respond to these needs, year after year! As winter approaches, LSI relies on your loving

support to meet the demands for winter apparel for children and youth at Beloit and Bremwood. Children in residential treatment have little control over their lives, so it's important for us to give children the opportunity, when possible, to shop for their new coat or mittens. Because of this, we ask that you please not donate articles of clothing. With your generous financial donation, many children will have the simple joy of choosing their new coat, knowing that they are loved and cherished.

If you would like more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org) or 563.676.2065.

*Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSI (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [www.LSIowa.org](http://www.LSIowa.org) and [www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).*

### **"Thank You, God"**

Every week, when 8-year-old Chase met with LSI's Pastor Dennis Bauer, he would ask to pray for "the same old thing: to find a good, loving forever family."

Chase is in third grade. But in his young life, he has already experienced trauma most of us cannot fathom. When Chase was 6, he was removed from his home and his mother's parental rights were terminated. He felt confused, terrified, and shocked. Chase struggled to cope with his anger and emotions. He acted out and became physically aggressive. Chase needed help, and LSI's Beloit Residential Treatment Center in Ames offered that help.

After arriving at Beloit, Chase quickly became involved in LSI's voluntary Spiritual Life program, where he participates in faith-based activities like art and music. Through regular meetings with Pastor Dennis, Chase says he is focusing on his faith and "trusting in God and saying prayers." Outside of Spiritual Life, Chase is also learning healthy skills through group therapy to help him cope on the difficult days.

Now, Chase is thriving. His confidence is building every day, and he has big plans for his future. He wants to be a surgeon when he grows up, and he dreams of learning to bake and do woodworking.

And the immediate future is looking pretty bright, too: Chase is in the process of being adopted. During a recent visit with Pastor Dennis, Chase prayed a different prayer: "Thank you, God, for giving me a family."

*At the September church council meeting, it was decided that this year we would encourage monetary donations for LSI to assist them as they provide winter apparel for children in residential treatment. Please indicate LSI in the memo line of your check for this worthwhile project as we help bring joy to these children. With your generous donation, each child can have the chance to shop for their own winter clothing.*



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### **Your gifts of love**

When you share Christ through your gifts of love, not only do you enter the process through which God blesses your life, but you also become the means of grace through which God blesses someone else.

In other words, you allow God to use you to meet someone's need or answer someone's prayer. You come a blessing, are blessed in return, and can, therefore, be a blessing again. It's a cycle that God wants to continue in your life.

The Newsletter Newsletter

Pastor's  
Ponderings

