**Pastor’s Corner, JULY, 2016**

The fourth of July is an iconic American holiday. All across the US families and friends will gather for grilling, picnics, and fireworks. Each Fourth of July, my mind always wanders back to my childhood where we lit sparklers, made s’mores, and ended the night watching fireworks together as a family.

The Fourth of July is about American independence, pride, and exceptionalism. We celebrate together the casting off of our status as colonies and laying claim to our own future. We celebrate all those times we have risen up against aggressors and fought for the safety and freedom of other people around the world. The Fourth of July is certainly about our freedoms as a nation, but also about freedom for people still under oppression around the world.

For people of faith, this holiday also provides us an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be citizens in this world and where our allegiance lies. Sociologists have identified what is called American Civil Religion. This theory argues that the symbols and meaning and importance we give to being an American looks similar to the symbols, meaning, and importance people give to other faith traditions. They point out that our heightened sense of American exceptionalism border on religious adherence.

When Jesus was asked if it was lawful to pay taxes, Jesus, sensing their trickery, asked to see a coin. He asked them, “Whose face is on it?” The answer, of course, was Caesar. “Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God,” Jesus says. In talking about wealth in Matthew 6, Jesus also says, “You cannot serve two masters; either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to one and despise the other.”

So, can Christians serve two masters—both God and country? When we participate in the rituals of celebration and symbolism that surround national holidays, are we somehow acting contrary to our faith?

I don’t think so. We can love and celebrate the things about this country that are great—freedoms that are enjoyed in few other places on this planet. We can celebrate that men and women have fought, and died, to secure and defend the freedoms we enjoy.

At the same time, we should also acknowledge that freedoms and rights are not equal across the globe, or even here within our own country. We are not perfect, and this is not yet the world God is actively creating through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. There is a long way to go, and God’s Kingdom cannot be brought by human means. As people of faith, we continue to pray God’s Kingdom come and actively participate with the Holy Spirit in making the Kingdom known in this world.

So, by all means, enjoy this holiday with your family. Remember the sacrifices made to secure our freedoms in the US. And offer prayers to God. Pray that God’s Kingdom come, and come quickly, that all people, in all places, know the forgiveness, mercy, and love of God in Christ Jesus.

Peace,

Pr. JonPaul

**Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church**

**Council Minutes** June 12, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 by President John Poore. Pastor JonPaul led us in a devotional prayer from Lutheran Book of Prayers with a prayer for those who work in agriculture.

**NON-AGENDA**

 No guests

**REPORTS**

 The secretary’s reports were gone over with some explanation. There were reports from the May 1 Council meeting, the May 8 special Council meeting to decide how to handle Pastor JonPaul’s absence, the May 29 Congregational Meeting about reroofing the church, and the May 29 special Council meeting about choosing the roof color and getting a contract signed. The treasurer’s report was gone over. Some special items were highlighted orally. The $5,000 has been paid down to the roofers, bringing the building line item left in the budget to $17,079. We had a lift repair bill of $250. The April Mission Sunday offering to go to Lori Mai for costs due to cancer treatment was $239. May Mission Sunday offering to Bob Anderson was $302. It was noted that part of the $404.45 paid to Dave Vlcek for parts should have come from the general fund line item, not the Praise Team line item, since it was for the pastor’s microphone. The Pastor’s report was gone over. There was no Ambassadors’ report.

Kim made a motion to accept all reports. Second by Aaron. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

 **Education** – Roxie will contact Corissa to get the amount due for the registration of campers at Luther Park Camp. Four campers are looking at July 17th to the 22nd to attend camp.

 **Building** – There has been no work done on the trim on the soffit. The color of the roof and the steeple has been chosen; textured brown and copper metallic. The contract has been signed. There was some discussion about getting a porta-potty for the workers to use. Randy Sands is also waiting for proof of insurance from the roofing company.

 **Worship** – Tina has the recorded sermons on the website.

 We distributed a bible today to Sarah McAleer, who we missed when we distributed the other bibles.

 The registration for the Synod Assembly, $55, will be reimbursed to Pastor JonPaul. Monica’s has already been paid by the church.

 Mark Koser found that the Praise Team really didn’t feel the need to have a big-screen TV with the words of the songs, saving the cost of the TV and a splitter. That would bring the estimate for a new system down, approximately to $1,705 for a projector and laptop. John will talk to Mark and we will move forward on a vote to update the system as soon as we get an updated estimate from Mark. The monies would be taken from the general fund line item.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Mission offering** – June – Sojouner House – to pay down a loan

 July – Gary and Rhonda Hoverson have asked to be taken off the Mission Offering. We will instead collect money for Russ Sandley, Cindy Langreck’s nephew. He was in a very serious car accident.

 August – Anna Zarins – a young child in Mondovi with CP. Her parents need to buy a handicapped accessible van to help get Anna around.

 September – Liam Loughney – a 3-year-old boy with cancer – Kim Vlcek’s cousin’s grandson.

We also need to have a Back-to-School drive in August to help with school supplies for the Eleva-Strum school district.

Pastor’s contract – We have no amount entered for housing allowance. This makes Pastor’s taxes much higher, so we have started paying him a housing allowance. That should be noted on his contract/ Roxie will find out if there is only a percentage of his salary that can be allocated as housing allowance and we will get that recorded.

Also, now his contract allows for 2 weeks of vacation, including 2 Sundays. We need to come to a decision as to how to handle any Sundays that are taken off over the allowed 2. There was a suggestion that on Sundays over the allowed 2 the $125 pulpit supply charge be deducted from his wages. Another suggestion was that 1/52 of his yearly salary, $402, be deducted from his wages, Or, should we meet somewhere in the middle? Pastor JonPaul will call Greg Kaufmann to see if there is another pastor in the Synod in a similar position and how it is being handled.

**OTHER**

 The baptismal font will again be used. We will ask the ushers to make sure it is uncovered and has water in it.

 The next council meeting will be July 10, 2016, at 10:30.

Motion to adjourn was made by Kay. Second by Kim. Motion carried. The meeting closed at 11:54 with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Poore, Council Secretary

Members present: Pastor JonPaul Dragseth, Kim Vlcek, Kay Sands, John Poore, Aaron Sands, Roxie Ulness, Ruth Poore, Nola Herzberg

**This month’s Mission Offering**

The mission offering recipient designated for July is Russ Sandley. He suffered severe injuries in a truck accident in North Dakota last November and is no longer able to work. Russ has been staying with his aunt, Cindy Langreck, while he recuperates

**Treasurers’ Report**

 None submitted

**Praise Team News**

The praise team will play during worship at Pleasant Valley on July 24 and 31. The group will also lead worship at the Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility on those dates. An invitation was received for the group to play at Sabylund Lutheran and we are working on scheduling that date in August or September.

**W ELCA**

 Please join us at the retreat in August see info and registration for enclosed.

**Parish Nursing**

Ruthann will take blood pressures during coffee hour on July 10th after worship, in Monica’s office.

**Women's Retreat**

"Nurturing Compassion" will be the topic of the Women of the ELCA Dairyland Conference retreat this year at Luther Park in Chetek. The event is scheduled from 2 pm on August 18 to 3 pm on August 19. Pastor Jason Clifton will be the guest speaker and worship leader. Registration is $60 for both days and $30 for just Friday. Contact Kim Vlcek at vlcekkr@yahoo.com for more information. Check bulletin board for flyer. Flyer will also be in June or July newsletter. See Kim Vlcek for more info.

**Thank You Cards**

 none

 **IN NEED OF PRAYER**

**Here is our Prayer Concern list:**

**Carol Holty -** Carol is hospitalized in St. Cloud, MN and waiting for test results for medical issues with her lungs and heart. Nicki Vlcek's mother.

**Kim Hubbard** - She was seriously injured in a car accident.

**Linda Ahlers** – pray for healing, liver surgery; Lake City, MN (friend of the Poore’s)

**Al Ahlers** - for healing

**Our service men and women, including Alex Bauer & Brendan Poore,** deployed to Kuwait

**The inmates at CVCTF**

**TEXTS AND READERS FOR JULY**

**Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – 3rd**

Isaiah 66:10-14  *Julie Schwennsen*

Psalm 66:1-9

Galatians 6:[1-6]7-16

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

**Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – 10th**

Deuteronomy 30:9-14 *Annabelle McAleer*

Psalm 25:1-10

Colossians 1:1-14

Luke 10:25-37

**Ninth Sunday after Pentecost – 17th**

Genesis 18:1-10a *Randy Sands*

Psalm 15

Colossians 1:15-28

Luke 10:38-42

**Tenth Sunday after Pentecost – 24th**

Genesis 18:20-32*Roxie Ulness*

Psalm 138

Colossians 2:6-15[16-19]

Luke 11:1-13

**Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost – 31st**

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

*Ruthann Knutson*

Psalm 49:1-12

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21

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**FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE:**

**\*NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS: Sunday, July 17th for the August Newsletter.**

**Call Monica Bahr - 715-287-4742,**

**or E-mail:** dmbahr@tcc.coop. **Also, E-mail the church at:** plesntvalleyluth@tcc.coop **with any bulletin or newsletter announcements, esp. prayer request and updates. Thanks.**

 **Bulletin items due no later than Wednesday afternoon, when I will print them.**

 **IN NEED OF PRAYER**

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**Our service men and women, including Alex Bauer & Brendan Poore,** deployed to Kuwait

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**This month’s Mission Offering Goes to** Russ Sandley, Cindy Langreck’s nephew. He was in a very serious truck accident.

**Humor from Church**

 **(found on an email)**

**Did Noah Fish?**

**A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"**

**"No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms."**

July News from Luther Park

What's New at Luther Park?

On Thursday, June 9th, Luther Park Board of Directors hosted a welcome picnic for the summer staff – this year there are 36. Pastors Brad and Bert, our grill masters, grilled brats with all the fixins', plus, we provided delicious salads, chips, and desserts. After dining, the summer staff concluded the evening with a very uplifting worship service. What a wonderful group of talented young people from the United States and around the world!

Summer camp officially began with the arrival of the first campers on Sunday, June 12th. New friends, a deeper faith, and new memories are being made each week. As of June 15th, 930 campers are registered for this summer!

Saturday, August 13 beginning at 10 a.m.: Plans for Heart for Luther Park, our one big fundraiser for the year, include viewing beautiful quilts inside the Chapel, and, depending on the weather, auctioning those quilts outside this year. Our auctioneer is former Bishop Bob Berg. Silent auction items will still be displayed in the Fireside Room of the Chapel. Donations of quilts and silent auction items are welcome. Dinner will be available for purchase beginning at 11 a.m. This year the menu includes grilled chicken, potato salad, baked beans, dinner roll, pickles and a beverage. Pie and ice cream will also be available for purchase. Kids' Day Camp for children in attendance is available for $15 and includes lunch, swimming, crafts and FUN!

New this year: Raffle tickets for: 1) Courtyard Steps Quilt valued at $1,000; 2) Two Registrations for 2017 Summer Camp valued at $750; 3) Chain Saw Carved Bear valued at $500. Plus, Dave Dobbs is offering a separate raffle the day of the event for a Brick-Oven Pizza Party (within a 40 mile radius) valued at $750. A 2nd day raffle is for a kayak with paddle. All Drawings will take place beginning at 3 p.m. during the Heart for Luther Park event. Please plan to attend to support the ministry at Luther Park!

Thank you to ALL who work at Luther Park and to those who attend camp. We thank you for your support and appreciate your continued prayers.

Kay Moen-Urseth

Member of the Board of Directors

 Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church

W 2450 Cty. Rd. WW

Eleva WI 54738

“That all May come, Serving all the People of God”

Church office: 715-287-4473

Church Secretary: Monica Bahr – Home: 715-287-4742

Church E-mail: plesantvalley@tcc.coop

Website: [www.pleasantvalleylutheran.com](http://www.pleasantvalleylutheran.com)

**PLEASANT VALLEY NEWSLETTER**

***‘That all may come, Serving all the people of God’***

**JULY 2016**

**INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Celebrate the 4th!**