



THE APRIL BELL 2021

Bethany Lutheran Church of Wisconsin Dells, WI
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BEING EASTER PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

Several years prior to the pandemic taking hold of the world, the ELCA was beginning to look at how the churchwide organization is structured. What are we focused on? What are the staff people working on? How is it affecting the whole church? Is it relevant?

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton noted, this isn't something that just sprang up because of or during the pandemic, but we have been working on this for years. We're not doing this to combat or counteract the trend lines that we see in the church, though that is something we're concerned about.

We're trying to find a way to activate each of us to invite others to find community, justice and love. That's it.

How do we talk about love and grace, when many see the church as being anti-science, anti-intellectual, anti-gay, anti-having any kind of dialogue, and we in the ELCA have a theology that is the opposite of that! How can we be the ones to grab hold of that doctrine of grace and justification that brings freedom, and invite more people in? How can we be heard as an authentic voice of Christianity?

So...the ELCA churchwide organization has implemented **Future Church**, a new working structure focused on motivating the entire church to actively share the news of Jesus with more people so that they might experience community, justice and love. The design emphasizes the belief that members, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization and its partner organizations all have important roles in the church's mission.

The church's three expressions (congregations, synods and the churchwide organization) will certainly remain, but the Future Church design is centered on a "One Church" identity that will bring greater collaboration to the mission of sharing the gospel of God's love and grace in the world.

The Future Church design stresses three goals:

- A welcoming church that engages new and diverse people...God's Love is for all creation.
- A thriving church rooted in tradition but radically relevant.
- A connected church that shares a common purpose and direction.

Bishop Eaton points out, we are on a mission. That's exciting! Our lives have meaning, deep meaning. They have been given meaning because we're beloved of God.

And we're free to share that. I think we live pretty isolated lives in the United States in a lot of ways, but we're not alone. We don't do this alone; we're invited into this great cloud of witnesses. That, to me, is exciting. That we have this mission that's been given to us—and doing it all together!

This is not a program of the church...this is our celebration of faith.

In so many ways this is what it means to be Easter folks in the world, empowered by and through the Holy Spirit! Share the news that we are loved by God!

Be renewed; be refreshed in your time with God.

***Blessings,
Pastor Craig
608-432-1835
revcw2016@gmail.com***



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

WRPQ RADIO BROADCAST • 740 AM / 99.7 FM

11:00 am

(also streamed on their web site – www.wrpq.com)

CONFIRMATION

Class on Wednesday, April 21

Class on Wednesday, April 28

4:00 to 5:00 pm

Confirmation Sunday for 8th Graders is set for Sunday, May 23



**EASTER
SERVICE**
HE IS RISEN!

SUNDAY, APRIL 4
9AM

Please make a reservation - 608-254-4501

Bishop Eaton issues statement addressing anti-Asian racism

My enemies trample on me all day long, for many fight against me. O Most High, when I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:2-4).

As a nation, we continue to witness and suffer from the cruelties of racial and gender-based violence. In recent days, we have witnessed the horror of gun violence in Atlanta and the vandalism of one of our ELCA congregations in Seattle.

As church we grieve the mass shooting in Atlanta, Ga., that took the lives of eight people, six of them Asian women. As church we join Bishop Kevin Strickland of the Southeastern Synod in observing that "God has called us to become the beloved community that God created where all are valued and honored. We then are called through the waters of our baptism to strive for justice and peace in all the world, for all."

Naming the victims' gender and race matters. Women of color live at the intersection of racism and sexism and do not get to choose oppressions. The ELCA social message "Gender-based Violence" teaches that "gender-based violence is a global evil that marks millions of lives." A white male killing six Asian American women is a racist and gender-based act of violence. Over the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in anti-Asian racism and violent attacks, fueled by hate speech and racist political rhetoric. The organization Stop AAPI Hate has tracked 3,795 hate incident reports from Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Women constituted 68% of the victims, with many reporting instances of sexual harassment and sexual and physical abuse. Reports of escalating violence do not stop in the United States — they are global.

For the Asian community, fear of violence affects daily life. This week Grace Chinese Lutheran Church in Seattle was targeted with a racist message scrawled on the driveway of its property. Responding to this incident, Shelley Bryan Wee, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, said, "The violence that is being done against people of Asian descent is heartrending and blasphemous. We are mindful that people are being injured and even killed in the name of bigotry."

As church, let us affirm the words of Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms: "A crime against any community is a crime against us all." As church, we condemn the sins of racism, sexism and xenophobia in all their forms. As church, we lift up and pray for the support and protection of Grace Chinese Lutheran and its pastors, Jimmy Hao and Wendy Chew. We declare solidarity with our Asian American siblings; we lament with the families that lost loved ones in the shootings; we remember our neighbors working on the frontlines of the pandemic; and we seek ways to support organizations that combat racial violence against all communities. This violence and aggression must stop.

O God of all, with wonderful diversity of languages and cultures you created all people in your own image. Free us from prejudice and fear, that we may see your face in the faces of our Asian siblings and people around the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (Adapted from Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly.)

In Christ,
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

CONTACTING PASTOR

Do you have special prayer requests?

Pastor Craig is available by phone and by email: revcw2016@gmail.com

Pastor Craig may be reached on his cell phone, 608-432-1835 or at the Church, 254-4501

IN HONOR,
CELEBRATION,
and MEMORY



April 4 – The flowers are given to the glory of God in honor of family by Judith Connick

April 11 – The flowers are given to the glory of God in honor of John Morse and Kim Field birthdays by Pat Morse

LOOKING AHEAD

May 9

Honoring the Senior Class of 2021

LOOKING WAY AHEAD

Bethany has been chosen for Maurer's Market Round-up Program for the Month of September, 2021

PICK-UP TRUCK and DRIVER NEEDED



A member has asked if we could help them donate about a pickup truck load of items to the Agrace Thrift Store in Madison. There is a location on either the west or east side of town. We have the items at church, but a pickup with a topper would be needed to transport them. Please call the church office if you can help us with this request. Thank you!