

Bethesda Banner

June/July 2020

Volume 20

Issues 6 & 7

Reopening of Church Target Date - September

Pastor Roy Thakurdial

The question that everyone in the church is asking is, "When will we be able to assemble for public worship and other activities in the church again?" The answer is not before September.

The office of the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC, through Bishop Pryse, has sent out a letter to the congregations informing them that September is the earliest we can reopen the congregations for worship again. This is a decision of the National Church, the ELCIC. The decision to re-open in

September comes out of an abundance of caution and after much consideration. Bishop Pryse states in his letter, "I fully recognize that the four provincial jurisdictions that our synod encompasses will each establish different schedules for the easing of restrictions. In addition, it is possible that regional distinctions might be established within individual provinces. Still, I believe that there is great value in all of us anticipating a more distant horizon for potential reopening than we might be hoping is for." In his letter the Bishop

further states, “As such, it my strong recommendation that our synod’s congregations not contemplate initiating in-person worship experiences within our church buildings until the beginning of September at the earliest.

As we wait patiently for the time of reopening of our congregation for worship and other activities, Council and I wish to urge our members to continue to stay in touch with the church and each other through the on-line worship services, email, telephone, social media and through the various networks people have established to stay in touch with each other before and since the lock-down.

Financially, the congregation is managing to meet its commitments. This is partly because members have been conscientious about keeping their financial stewardship to the church by sending their offerings. Members have been dropping off, mailing in their offerings, as well as through the Pre-Authorised Remittances(PARS) system. If you have not been able to keep up your stewardship to the church and would like to do so you may use any of the above ways. If you wish to know more about the PARS system, please contact the church office for information.

Council and I wish to let everyone know that we are doing everything possible to keep the church healthy and it good order by carrying out all its administrative, missional

and ministry activities as much as is needed and possible in the present situation.

Please continue to stay safe. ■

Not Even The Gates Of Hell

From Pastor Roy Thakurdyal

It is ironic that the church all around the world had their doors closed to public worship on Pentecost Sunday, which was last Sunday. The irony lies in the fact that Pentecost is the day the Church was born. The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. On that day, as at all Pentecost time in those days, the Jewish people gathered in Jerusalem from all over the Roman Empire to celebrate the festival of Pentecost. Those people spoke

many different languages. When the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples they spoke in many languages as the Spirit enabled them. The people heard the disciples speaking in their own languages, even though the disciples were Galileans and knew perhaps only one language, or two. Speaking in tongues, the disciples proclaimed the “mighty deeds of God”. Three thousand people were baptized that day after they heard Peter’s sermon. The church was born that day.

The COVID 19 pandemic, has for all intent and purposes, brought the entire world to an abrupt slow down if not halt since March of this year. The Church had to close their doors to public worship and any kind of gatherings. Churches responded to this forced but necessary closure by turning to the internet,

social media and various other ways to reach people with the gospel and continue to provide spiritual nurture and care. Nevertheless people miss the public gatherings to worship, fellowship, study the bible, pray and the many other things people do at church. The question being asked is, "When will we be able to gather again in church like we did in normal times?" This question is answered in our page 1 article.

The church is being affected in many ways, both positive and negative, by this pandemic. One of the positive things is that the church will begin to use the internet and social media more effectively and widely in its mission and ministry. Negatively, the shut-down will cause many congregations to enter into a financial crisis, from which many will find it

difficult to recover, at least for a long time to come. No matter what happens the Church will survive this pandemic.

The Church has faced crises before. It is no stranger to persecution, oppression and suppression by the powers that be. In its 2000 years of history the church weathered the storms of wars, plagues, divisions and more. It is still here, even after empires have risen and fell. It will be here to the end. Christ Jesus, the lord of the church promised that, "...Not even the gates of hell shall prevail against his church." You can bank on that promise.

In time Bethesda, like other churches, will reopen its doors for worship and all the things we do as people of God. We shall have learnt

that our freedom to worship is a gift and should not be taken for granted. We shall weather the storm and be back together, stronger in faith, fellowship, purpose and our life together as a congregation. Stay safe. ■

Worship and Music Update

Dave Smith, Chairman

Worship

With the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions on gatherings to stop the spread of the virus, we are still not able to worship together in the church sanctuary. Pre-recorded Sunday worship videos will continue to be posted to the church's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/bethesdaluthernunionville/>.

They are also accessible on the church website at <https://bethesdalutheranchurch.ca/site/series/2020>

[-sermons/](#). If you know of a church member or friend or relative that does not have access to a computer or the internet perhaps you can call them on the phone and play the video with the phone close by so they can hear the audio of the service. We thank Pastor Roy and Alice and their “helpers” Wilhelm and Roswitha von Seefried for preparing, recording and posting these videos to allow us to continue to worship “together” as a congregation, even though we are apart. As this form of worship is new to us all we are continually trying to improve and build on the format and presentation. Any feedback on the worship services is appreciated.

Worship and Music Committee

The committee is not formally meeting at this time. However, if you have any comments or suggestions for us during this time, please contact Pastor Roy or Dave Smith (905-472-5598 or smithdn@rogers.com). ■

Chairman's Message

Dave Smith

We pray that you and your families are staying safe during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are happy to see that some businesses are allowed to open again so that some people can get back to work. However, this happiness is tinged with trepidation because the virus is still among us and we must still be careful to keep our distance from others and wear a mask if necessary to try to prevent the spreading of the virus. We pray for the safety of these workers that are going back to work and also pray for those people that cannot go back to work yet or are only working reduced hours and are experiencing financial difficulties and the stress and worry of not being able to make ends meet.

Another issue that has been brought to the forefront in the last few weeks is racism. Like the

virus, although we may not see it very much in our community, it is there and we must be vigilant. If we do see it we must speak out. We must not be silent or it will continue. Racism towards any group affects us all as a society. Everyone has a right to live with dignity, respect and justice.

The pandemic is continuing to affect not only our weekly church activities but our special events. We could not have our Spring Music Concert in May or our Garage Sale this past weekend. Other June events cancelled are our Spring BBQ and the Cemetery Memorial Service. These are important events of participation, sharing, fellowship, and remembrance for the congregation and the community. The Church Council feels it is important to try to provide opportunities for participation and fellowship for the congregation so are initiating some virtual church activities. In place of our Spring BBQ on Sunday, June 14, we invite you to a virtual fellowship on ZOOM at 11:30 AM. More details of this event can be found in this

Banner and will be communicated by email and on the church website. Council has recruited the Youth Group to organize a video activity for congregational members and families to participate in. Stay tuned for more information on this.

We hope you are able to join us for our weekly Sunday morning worship service posted on the church Facebook page and website. You are also encouraged to keep in contact with family, friends and members and offer support and assistance if necessary. These are times when people feel more isolated and concerned about their health and well-being.

We thank all those that are continuing their offerings to the church during this time. While we have reduced expenses now and applied for Federal emergency benefits, we continue to have monthly bills and other expenses like insurance that need to be paid. If you are able, you can continue to provide financial support by mailing

your donation cheque to the church or consider monthly donations using PAR. You can find more information about PAR on our website.

If you have any comments, suggestions, concerns or need assistance of any kind or know of someone that needs assistance, do not hesitate to contact myself, Pastor Roy or any other member of Church Council.

Take care and God bless. ■

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Sharecropper Project Update June 2020

by Lorne Smith

Bethesda's Sharecropper project of winter wheat is growing well. It is quite amazing how winter wheat is planted in September, grows slowly and then goes dormant for the winter. As soon as the frost is out of the ground and the soil begins to warm, the spring

growth begins. It becomes the first grain crop to be harvested often in late July. We hope for a good crop and a good price as the needs of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help those in need around the world is particularly urgent this year of the pandemic.

Donations are appreciated throughout the year. They can be mailed to the church or dropped off in the church mailbox.

Drive by the SW corner of Warden Ave. and the Stouffville Road to watch it grow and mature. Our sign is on the Stouffville Road, just west of Warden. ■

Rediscovering your Creative Side

These days of COVID 19 Pandemic lock down have forced us into self-isolating. Self-isolating at first felt like an unexpected extended holiday. As the days stretched into weeks and then months the novelty of self-isolating wore off. Feelings of boredom and even depression replaced the initial

holiday- like feeling. People began to explore ways to cope with the negative feelings of the lockdown. They turn to such activities as baking and cooking, knitting and sewing, art and craft.

People are discovering hidden talents or rediscovering talents that had gone dormant. What have you been doing to cope with emotional challenges of self-isolating?

Alice and I have started a vegetable garden in the space west of the parsonage. We have put in plants such as egg plants, tomatoes, cabbages, cucumbers, sweet peppers, long beans, green onions, Lettuce, ochros, bitter melons and of course hot peppers.

We have found that our garden activities to be very therapeutic. Everyday we look forward to checking out the garden, watering the plants and caring for them. We look forward with excitement and anticipation to reaping the fruits of our labours in about four to six weeks. ■



**Bethesda's Annual
Spring BBQ
A Virtual BBQ ON ZOOM**

Date: Sunday, June 14
Time: 11.30 am
Venue: On Zoom –
hosted by Pat Neuman on
her zoom account

**Let us get together
and have a Good
Time**

Dear Members,

This coming Sunday, June 14 would have been our Annual Spring BBQ. Even though we cannot gather in the car park of the church we can gather virtually. So, we are planning to still have the BBQ this Sunday. We shall meet on Zoom. Pat Neuman has graciously offered to host the virtual BBQ on her zoom account. We shall gather at 11.30 am.

This is how it will happen. Everyone who wants to join in the virtual BBQ please send pat your email address or give her the go ahead to use your email address as per the church's telephone directory.

Pat will organize this from her end. She will admit people on to the site at the right time.

Everyone is invited to prepare their own BBQ .

You will need to download zoom app on to your laptop or desktop, ipad etc go to Zoom.US and download the app. People may join ., in order to join the virtual BBQ. In order to download just by phone if they choose. The telephone numbers are 1+647-374-4685; 1+647-558-0588.

Let us connect with each other and have some fun, pandemic or not. Pastor Roy

Treasurer's Report

Kim McKinney

For the Month Ended April 2020 *

	April		Year to Date		Prorated	Approved
	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>Monthly Budget</u>	<u>Full Year Budget</u>
<u>Operating Results:</u>						
Recurring Receipts (1)	\$ 5,440	\$ 11,993	\$ 31,040	\$ 40,968	\$ 43,433	\$ 130,300
Expenses (2)	8,043	20,003	38,642	50,058	47,233	141,700
Operating Position before below	<u>(\$2,603)</u>	<u>(\$8,010)</u>	<u>(\$7,602)</u>	<u>(\$9,090)</u>	<u>(\$3,800)</u>	<u>(\$11,400)</u>
One-time Memorial Donations	-	-	400	600	-	-
Net Operating Position after above	<u>(\$ 2,603)</u>	<u>(\$ 8,010)</u>	<u>(\$ 7,202)</u>	<u>(\$ 8,491)</u>	<u>(\$ 3,800)</u>	<u>(\$ 11,400)</u>
<u>Net Other Receipts - Sharecroppers (3)</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>(\$ 162)</u>	<u>(\$ 40)</u>	<u>(\$ 212)</u>		
<u>Capital Items:</u>						
Receipts (4)	\$ 75	\$ 535	\$ 22,348	\$ 1,498		
less: Capital Expenditures	0	(281)	0	(11,369)		
Net Capital Items	<u>\$ 75</u>	<u>\$ 254</u>	<u>\$ 22,348</u>	<u>(\$ 9,871)</u>		
Net)	<u>(\$ 2,528)</u>	<u>(\$ 7,918)</u>	<u>\$ 15,106</u>	<u>(\$ 18,574)</u>		

* As tabled and approved at the Church Council Meeting June 4, 2020

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Treasurer's Report *(continued from page 8)*

Notes:

- (1) Donations in the month were 55% below the April 2019 offerings due to the impact of COVID 19 reducing the number of offerings.

May donations were expected to fall as well but were actually above April at \$9,120 due to timing.
- (2) Excludes the positive impact of the receipt of anticipated wage subsidies (net \$5,400) and the payment of the annual insurance premium - approximately \$7,500.
- (3) Includes the net impact of the annual Sharecropper's campaign and HST rebates previously reported.
- (4) Please note some members of the congregation are making regular **CAPITAL** committed offerings including memorial donations.
- (5) After accounting for ongoing projected commitments including contributions to the Synod -
Current Net Cash Available for Ongoing Operations (estimated) **\$9,807**

The "W" Upholstering & Interiors Ltd.

The Management of
"W" Upholstering & Interiors Limited
wishes to encourage everyone to stay safe
by observing all the advisories and
protocols for dealing with the
COVID 19 Pandemic.

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