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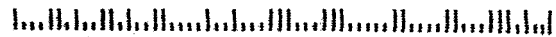
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	<u>Judi Brayer</u>	<u>Jbrayer@mansfield.edu</u>

FROM THE RECTOR:

Nine years ago this month, America's national security and serenity were shattered by the September 11 terrorist attacks. Since then, we've been stressed by participation in two foreign wars and a global economic meltdown. "My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick," writes the prophet Jeremiah (8:18). "For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me" (v. 21). We know what Jeremiah is feeling, don't we? Heartsickness, grief, loss of joy. Hurt, dismay and deep mourning. We know it. Even if we don't admit it.

The challenge of embracing Jeremiah is that his profound sadness runs against the grain of our natural American optimism. We have a cultural predisposition to look on the bright side, accentuate the positive and search for the silver lining. Tell that to the veteran of the Iraq War who now has brain damage from a roadside bomb. The prophet Jeremiah is a truth-teller, and respects his people enough to be brutally honest, not overly optimistic. In ancient Israel and today, people facing tough times need the truth, not spin. There's always a place for a message of hope, but it should be grounded in God's promises, not in platitudes and inspirational feel-good stories.

As in all forms of positive thinking, the key is to ignore the negative emotions and realities and focus instead on your desired outcomes — health and wealth. In the face of all this optimism, the prophet Jeremiah says, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored? There's nothing Bright-Sided in these words from the prophet. He's weeping day and night for the slain of his people, just as we might weep for the victims of 9/11, the soldiers killed in Iraq, the civilians injured in Afghanistan and the senior citizens who lost their life savings in the global economic meltdown.

Jeremiah's message is a hard one to hear. Speaking through the prophet, God is sending us a double-edged message. Not just love, which would be the Bright-Sided approach, but judgment and love.

In the economic meltdown of the last few years, lenders were approving substandard mortgage applications so they could make money off of mortgages, and buyers were lying about their incomes so they could borrow money for houses they really couldn't afford. Everyone was "greedy for unjust gain." Turn on 'reality' television to see how people today still act shamefully, yet they aren't at all ashamed. God's judgment comes through loud and clear, as applicable to us as it was to the Israelites. We're setting ourselves up for destruction if we don't repent of our sinful ways.

Fortunately, God also sends a message of love through the prophet. It's critically important to understand that God Almighty is speaking through Jeremiah with the words, "My joy is gone, my grief is upon me, my heart is sick" (v. 18). These are God's words, God's grief, God's heartsickness — not simply the feelings of a human prophet. The Lord God is expressing the hurt of someone who is deeply in love. In love with us. Clearly, God wants to be in relationship with us, and he invites us to repent and return to his way. God reaches out to us in love, and promises never to let us go.

A few months before the terrorist attacks of 2001, the movie Moulin Rouge was released that provided an escape from the horrors of life in the 21st century. A romantic musical set in Paris in 1899, one song from the film became a hit, capturing the hope of two people in love. It's a hopeful song because it contains the promise of love in the face of any pain and suffering the world can throw at us. Its chorus goes like this: Come what may
Come what may I will love you until my dying day.

This love isn't based on happy endings, improved health or sudden wealth. It's the kind of love God feels for us — a love that's eternal, come what may. And the second verse of the song is equally appropriate: And there's no mountain too high No river too wide
Sing out this song and I'll be there by your side Storm clouds may gather And stars may collide But I'll love you until the end of time.

This is God's love for us — heartfelt, passionate, eternal. It's a love that's brutally honest, calling us to repent and return to God's way. But because it's love, it engenders hope, which gives birth to optimism, all of which can sustain us, come what may. As we enter a new church year, let us strive to keep our relationships with our God and each other those filled with hope, love and optimism.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Fr. Bill +

OUR PRAYERS are requested for our friends and members: Daniel Brayer, Louise Schaive, Phyllis Moffat, Sandra Sisson, Bill Stanton, Betty Stone, Rosanna Smith, Sybil Edson, Aileen Gowdy, Eloise Houseknecht, Marge Lowman

HOSPITALITY HOUR

We need to cover each Sunday during the fall months. Hosting hospitality is more fun and less work if you do it with a friend, or your family, or your church group. How do you host Hospitality?

1. Sign up on the Hospitality Hour sign up sheet.
2. Come early on that Sunday to have time to set up in the back of the Church. Coffee is provided along with the filters in the Kitchen with labeled carafs.
3. Cups and napkins, along with sugar, sweetener, tea bags, and coffee creamer are in the Storage container in the back of the church under the table.
4. Prepare a drink or bring juice for those who do not drink tea or coffee.
5. Sometimes people bring homemade or purchased baked goods; Cookies for the children; Fresh fruits or veggies.

Afterwards: Pick up, wash the carafs, clean up the kitchen, and wipe the table. *Thank you!*

THE LABYRINTH - *Inner Peace Walks*

It is in a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving we thank everyone for all the support of prayer and special gifts to this new ministry to the Church and surrounding community in promoting the knowledge and purpose of this spiritual and healing ministry of the Labyrinth.

The labyrinth is a Christian-based ministry and yet made available and inclusive of many religious traditions. You are invited to gather for Spiritual centering, empowerment and heavenly guidance. One walks the labyrinth with intention. The labyrinth is a place created for specific purposes, which include but are not restricted to spirituality, creativity, growth, problem solving, team building, stress management, rejuvenation, decision making, and meditation. The labyrinth invites one into sacred space and provides a temporary abandonment of the ordinary world for the realm of a deeper understanding of the Holy.

WHY CHURCH?

Every pastor understands that in a real sense, the church year begins anew after summer break. Vacations are over, school is back in session and church programming resumes. I thought that this is a perfect time to engage you through my sermons why we gather together as a church. So I will be offering beginning on September 12, a series of sermons to answer the question, "*Why do we do church, anyway?*"

Here is the schedule: Sept. 12 - Why church? - Community; Sept. 19- Why church? - Real People; Sept. 26 - Why church? - Money Matters; Oct. 3 - Why church? - Mentors.

THE BLESSING OF ANIMALS + Saturday October 2

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As a former celebrant and preacher at Trinity, colleague of Fr. Bill, and ecumenical partner in our Lutheran/Episcopal conversations, it would lovely for Trinity to be represented at this occasion. Please call Grace directly with your participation and numbers.

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THE "C" TEAM - Lutheran & Episcopal Churches in Conversation

The four Lutheran congregations in this area (Bethany, Emanuel, Holy Trinity and Our Saviour's) and Trinity Episcopal Church have formed what is called the "C" Team. The "C" can stand for collaboration, cooperation, communication or other productive "C" words. The governing body at each of the churches has appointed one representative to attend meetings along with the pastors of these congregations. The primary goal of this group is to unite our 5 congregations in mutual ministry - to discuss collaboration, to cooperate and communicate various ways to achieve this collaboration through multi-church events and activities, and to provide an atmosphere of hope with new possibilities for our congregations in the future.

Our first meeting was held on May 27, 2010. We brainstormed the many events in which all 5 churches can participate. We focused on the Youth Led Worship Service and picnic to be held on Sunday, June 13 at Harris Hill Park. We also discussed Vacation Bible School to be held at Bethany, a Sunday School workshop for teachers, and the idea of leadership listings from each church. What are the gifts each congregation brings to shared ministry?

The first collaborative event (all 5 congregations were part of the planning as well as participation) was the joint Worship Service and picnic held on June 13, 2010, on a rainy Sunday morning at Harris Hill Park. The memorable and inspirational Service was led by the youth, and was very well attended by members of all 5 congregations. The picnic was a huge success.

At our June 16, 2019 meeting, the group agreed that we should be called the "C" Team. We discussed the June 13 Service and picnic at Harris Hill, recognizing some pros and cons. We all felt that the youth who attended and those who led the Service seemed happy and energized in each other's company, so we discussed having another youth event in the near future that will tap in and build upon that good rapport. One idea was youth teams who would do service projects for each congregation, and end the day with a fun entertainment event or comedy show. Another idea was a Community Kitchen event by our young people. Other discussion by the "C" Team concerned ways we are better together than apart and without overlapping our church functions. We identified 5 areas in which we overlap, where there are numerous opportunities to work/play together: YOUTH, FAMILY, FELLOWSHIP, EDUCATION and WORSHIP. We determined that it is critical to get to know one another and look at how our ministries overlap. We also talked about inviting other churches to share in conversation with us, especially the other Episcopal churches in the area.

The Third meeting of the "C" Team was held on June 30, 2010. As a team we recognized that we have a need to develop a plan for Communication - and this article is just one avenue for communication. As one of the first steps in our Collaboration, we discussed getting the leadership of all 5 churches together (Council/Vestry) for a retreat in the fall. The goals would be to get to know each other better, and to share experiences and ministry. As September is quickly approaching, with the start of Sunday School and other multi-age educational/formational classes and activities, we may also facilitate a conversation among Christian education leaders - before the start of fall classes - in order to share ideas and learn about one another's approach to faith formation.

Your "C" Team will continue to meet regularly to explore this vision for Collaboration, Cooperation and Communication between and among churches to enrich our ministry and mission. It is truly an exciting and energizing time! Your congregational contact persons (see next article for names) are eagerly awaiting your input, so please freely share your ideas! Participating together makes us more than the sum of our parts. The Holy Spirit has led us to this place and time, and we are beginning to experience the fruits of working and playing together as we progress toward a more expansive fellowship. SEE NEXT ARTICLE ON WHAT THE "C" TEAM IS PROPOSING.

LEADERSHIP RETREAT - Episcopal Vestrys and Lutheran Councils

WHO: Council Leadership of all Elmira-Corning area Lutheran congregations and Vestry leadership of all Chemung County Episcopal Churches

WHAT: A retreat to get to get to know one another, to study God's word together and to reflect on God's mission for us in this time and place

WHEN: Friday, September 24 from 6pm-9pm and Saturday, September 25 from 9am-3pm
(Location TBD)

WHY: God calls us into the body of Christ in the waters of baptism. The body of Christ is bigger than any individual or congregation, but often, we live without awareness of one another and the identity we share. What would happen if we got to know one another, studied Scripture together, learned more about one another's ministries and areas of passion and strength? We want to find out!

The retreat will be facilitated by Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson, who serves as the Director of Evangelical Mission for the Upstate New York Synod of the ELCA. Pastor Amy has worked closely with a few of our congregations, including Emanuel Lutheran and Trinity Episcopal as they developed the partnership that includes sharing Pastor Bill's pastoral leadership. This retreat will be highly interactive and much of the discussion and reflection will happen through small groups, so we hope that as many people as possible from each congregation's leadership are able to take part!

There is no pre-determined outcome for our time together. We do not know where the Spirit may lead. We may identify areas where God is calling us to work more closely in partnership for the sake of being good stewards of our significant resources. We may identify opportunities for synergy, where our energy and resources come together to do more than we could even dream of by ourselves. We most certainly will listen for where God's Spirit is leading us as people and communities of faith. It promises to be a retreat full of imagining possibilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact your C-Team* representative:

Pastor Elizabeth Boesen (Our Saviour's Lutheran, Horseheads)

Pastor Joe Cotner (Holy Trinity Lutheran, Elmira)

Margaret Davies (Bethany Lutheran, Elmira)

Cynthia Klingensmith (Holy Trinity Lutheran, Elmira)

Caren Listopadzki (Emanuel Lutheran, Corning)

Pastor/Father Bill Lutz (Emanuel Lutheran, Corning; Trinity Episcopal, Elmira)

Judy Sheasley (Trinity Episcopal, Elmira)

Carol Witt (Our Saviour's Lutheran, Horseheads)

What's the C-Team? Glad you asked. The C-Team is a group made up of the Pastor and one lay representative each from the leadership of Bethany Lutheran (Elmira), Emanuel Lutheran (Corning), Holy Trinity Lutheran (Elmira), Our Saviour's Lutheran (Horseheads), and Trinity Episcopal (Elmira). The C-Team has been meeting over the past few months to talk about opportunities for Collaboration, Cooperation, Communication, Commonality in Christ – all the big C's! This retreat is an opportunity to expand the conversation and invite more people to dream with us about what God is calling us to be and do as communities of faith in the Elmira-Corning area.

LUTHERAN PASTORAL LETTERS - Pastor Cotner & Hoffman +FYI

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Change is a-comin'. It might be coming at a snail's pace, but it will get here eventually. It should come as no surprise; we've been talking about it on and off for a while now. With the declining number of pastors and much smaller number of people participating in the church, the model of "one church-one full time pastor" cannot be sustained in our area. No one church has enough people to do many of the things they would like to do; not many churches can afford a full-time pastor (and those that can are barely doing it, which means other opportunities for ministry are ignored). For the sake of God's mission for the Church in our area, we need to rethink how we organize ourselves and carry out our ministries—in particular, collaborating with other congregations.

This type of collaboration has already started. The four ELCA churches have shared some activities for a few years: the worship and picnic at Harris Hill; Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services; Practicing Our Faith. Earlier this year, Trinity Episcopal and Emanuel Lutheran entered into an agreement to share a pastor (Father Bill Lutz, originally just with Trinity) and begin working together in other areas of ministry. Somewhat later, the five churches formed "The C Team"—see the article in this issue for details. Basically, the purpose of the C Team is to envision ways for the the churches to collaborate in ministry.

And now a new wrinide: Pastor Hoffman is leaving Bethany to begin a call in Fairport (her last day here is September 12). First things first—please pray for Pastor Hoffman and Kevin (her husband) in their new situation, and for Bethany as it once again faces the uncertainty of a transition. For us here, another step will be taken in the dialogue about collaboration. A conversation will be initiated among us (with the help of Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson from synod staff) about how we might use the time of transition to move the five congregations into more extensive partnership with one another.

The trajectory of congregational life in our area is clear—we are headed toward more formal partnerships with one another. I don't know what that will look like in practice; that's why we have conversations, to eventually develop concrete proposals. At a basic level, it will mean sharing some staff and maybe more joint activities.

We will not be forced to do anything. The choice to participate in these conversations and in any plans that are developed will be ours. Personally, I think this is a great opportunity for us to re-vision and re-invigorate Holy Trinity's life.

The church situation in our area has changed. We can respond by doing nothing, acting as if the world is the same and the way we live can therefore remain the same. Or we can actively engage the new situation, creating a different way of doing church that fits present circumstances. I don't claim knowledge of what we "should" do—please pray for God's guidance for us in this uncertain time, and pray that we have the willingness and courage to do what God is asking of us.

In Christ,

Pastor Joe

Dear People of God at Bethany Lutheran Church,

I have enjoyed serving God among you over these past four years. I am so grateful that you risked inviting me to serve among you as a green seminarian and graciously welcomed me as your Intern Pastor, while I was still preparing for ordained ministry. I give thanks for your enthusiastic support in calling me to serve as your Pastor and for celebrating with me at my ordination. I am humbled by the ways you have trusted me to walk with you in your journey of faith and throughout all that life brings from births and baptisms and weddings and deaths. However, I am writing to resign as your Pastor. I have received and accepted a call to serve as the Senior Pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Fairport, NY. My last Sunday at Bethany will be on September 1:2 and my resignation is effective on September 15.

I realize that this announcement may come as a surprise. In the spring, I began to feel some stirrings of the Spirit, inviting me to imagine future possibilities for ministry. I did not anticipate that any concrete possibility would arise and come to fruition this quickly, but I feel confident that this is indeed the work of the Spirit. As YOU may know, I take great joy in collaborating with others in ministry, so I am excited to grow into this role as the head of staff with the opportunity to work with both an associate pastor and professional staff members in the areas of youth ministry and music ministry.

This transition is most certainly bittersweet. I have been blessed to serve among you during these years. You hold a dear place in my heart as the first congregation to allow me to serve as Pastor. Throughout the years together, we faithfully gathered for worship week after week, studied God's Word, provided opportunities to raise our children in the faith through Funday School and Vacation Bible School, nurtured our young people in affirming their faith, and distributed our God-given financial resources to those in need. I have seen the priesthood of all believers in action as many of you willingly shared your gifts, growing into leadership positions and caring for others in God's family. Together, we have been about God's work.

This congregation will continue to be about God's work, but I believe this transition will also create space to consider what the future might hold. This time of transition invites you to imagine what the future ministry of Bethany might look like and what kind of pastoral leadership will lead you into the next chapter of ministry for this time and place. I believe that Bethany is an exciting time, ripe with possibilities. For example, the deepening relationships with the area Lutheran and Episcopal congregations provide opportunities to develop a collaborative vision for witnessing to Christ in the Elmira-Corning communities.

Please know that there are many people who will walk with you through this time of transition. Bishop Marie Jerge and the rest of the synod staff will hold you in prayer. Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson will be the lead contact person from the synod office and will be in close contact with Council to plan for this time of transition, in addition to the support and presence of the local area clergy. I trust you will be in good hands.

I wish that it were possible to share this news with each and every one of you personally, but I trust that in the weeks to come, we will have the opportunity to say goodbye. I recall that "goodbye" came about as a shorthand for "God be with YOU" I most certainly trust that God will indeed continue to be with you as you gather and serve in the name of Christ. As I take my leave from you, I take comfort in God's promise that we all remain members of one and the same body of Christ.

God's Peace,

The Rev.. Abigail Zang Hoffman

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IN THE COMMUNITY.....

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY + October 3rd

World Communion Sunday will be held with other Elmira Churches on October 3rd. The site will be determined in the coming week when the pastors gather for their regular meeting. With some new pastors arriving, and some leaving, the clergy would like to continue this tradition, but want to have everyone on board to the opportunity.

Look in the Sunday bulletin for the announcement in the coming weeks.

THE BETHLEHEM FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

Lake Street Presbyterian Church continues its outreach feeding program - the Bethlehem Free Lunch Program. On Saturday, September 18th at 1:00 PM they open their doors for a free meal to the community. Meals will be prepared and served from their downstairs kitchen and the gymnasium will be turned into a dining room. Pastor Ross Raymond provides a short Bible study during the lunch. They are always looking for volunteers. Contact their church office for offering your time 732-2580.

THE CANTATA SINGERS

Rehearsals for current and new singers will again begin on Sunday, September 12th, 6-8:30 pm at the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Horseheads. For their first rehearsal there will be a lighthearted "meet and greet" of returning and potential new singers before the actual rehearsal. Snacks and beverages will be provided by the Board, and a few thoughts from the director, Will Wickham.

The Cantata Singers season begins with a Advent Concert on Dec. 5 at 3 PM with Vivaldi's "Gloria," traditional Christmas sing-along, plus music by John Rutter, Randall Thompson, Dale Warland, and local composer Dan Forrest. On Feb 27, 2011 at 3 PM the singers will open the Festival of Women in the Arts with a full program of female composers titled "A Decade of American women in Song: 2000-2009. Featured will be Carol Barnett's "The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass". Finally on May 16, 2011 at 4 PM the concert is entitled "Three B's plus One." Included are Brahms' second set of Liebeslieder Waltzes, Beethoven's Kyrie and Gloria from the "Mass in C", Bach's Cantata 131 and Samuel Barber's Agnus Dei". All locations are TBA.

Their website at www.cantatasingers.com has updates and additional information about our upcoming season under the Events tab. Check it out. Also contact the musical director of the Cantata Singers, Will Wickham at wwickham@stny.rr.com or 607-796-5034.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE COMPETITION

The Classic Café will sponsor this year's New York State Gingerbread House competition! We also welcome aboard once again The Christmas House, Elmira, NY.

This year there are new rules and categories that will make it easier for EVERYONE to build a Gingerbread House to support Habitat for Humanity while competing for cash prizes.

You can build your home anywhere and anytime by just dropping it off at the Arnot Mall's Center Court by 11:00 am for popular voting and judging by our special guest judges. More details will be forthcoming!

The date of this year's event is November 13, 2010. Updates will soon be available on our web site: www.GingerBreadNY.com For further information call or write Burt Beebe at PO Box 4153 Elmira, NY 14904 or 607-481-3787.

IN THE DIOCESE

NEW BEGINNINGS YOUTH WEEKEND

New Beginnings is a ministry that touches 6th-9th graders by helping them to understand that they are not alone in their triumphs and troubles with friends, family, and faith. It is a retreat where kids get to talk to each other about their life experiences, and pray for each other when tough things come up. Kids who attend are put into small groups called "family groups" and this is their family for the weekend, where they can confidentially share, listen, and learn. Their family works together during a time called "family sports time" and puts together a skit for the New Beginnings Talent Show! We do many different activities in family groups, but there are also large group times, song and praise times, open mic, worship, and the list goes on.

There are a few roles that New Beginnings needs filled in order to be successful: Spiritual Director (An ordained priest who leads the worships and Eucharist, is there for the tough topics, and talks about prayer), Married Couple (A married couple who act as the guides and support along the journey of the weekend- we work with them to prepare, as they are in front of the group a lot), Team Members (Kids and adults 10th grade and up who act as leaders of family groups, present talks, and act out skits that help the participants visualize the topics that are discussed), and Participants (Kids in 6th-9th grade who want to have an amazing weekend that is guaranteed to make them new friends, and change their lives).

The next weekend event is October 22-24 (AT VANDERKAMP) beginning at 2pm for TEAM and 6pm for PARTICIPANTS, and ends around 3:30 on Sunday the 24th for everyone. The TEAM overnight for the upcoming weekend is October 2-3, beginning at 2pm on the 2nd for all TEAM (SD, MS, TM) and ending after church on Sunday. The applications can be found at cny.anglican.org > ministry > youth ministry > New Beginnings ministry. There are applications for Team, Participants, and Church Youth Leaders

A VESTRY DAY

A Vestry Day will be held on Saturday, October 2nd* at Zion Church in Rome from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. The Day is designed to give each Vestry Member some practical background, tools, and resources to carry out their mission. Sponsored by the Formation for Ministry Team of the Commission on Ministry. Presentations will offer answers to such questions as: **What are my responsibilities as a vestry person or warden? *What rules or laws are in place to define how my church operates? *How can the Vestry handle conflicts when they arise? *Stewardship - is it just about the money?*

There will be question/answer periods offered throughout the day. The cost is \$5.00 per person and includes lunch, snacks, and all materials. Questions about the Vestry Day should be directed to Kathy Dengler at the Bishop's Office: 315/474-6596 or kdengler@cny.anglican.org.