



I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit. John 15.5

I happen to live with a vine scientist and I asked Hans recently to help me understand the science of how vines produce fruit.

Optimal conditions of soil nutrition, water, and sun lead to abundant fruit. That's not a surprise to anyone who's spent much time in a garden. Here's what surprised me - a vine's yield (it's fruitfulness) has as much to do with what happened in the vineyard in the previous year as what is happening this year. Past stress to the vine requires time to heal so that the vine's fruit-bearing can be optimized. I suspect this is not just true of vines.

Since Easter, we've gathered together and listened to nearly 90 individuals (representing 59 households) in our Bethlehem vineyard (as well as those who shared through email or calls). The willingness to come together in all manner of cold, rainy, and windy weather (and one day of sun!) shows the strength of connection we have to Christ, our vine, as well as a deep desire to be in community with one another! We started these sessions by asking people to share the high and low points of the last year for them or their households. As we listened in community, we began to hear some of the stressors our various branches have experienced this past year – separation from family and community connections, juggling continual change, struggles to balance multiple demands for time, as well as struggles to find ways to fill time, removal from comforting and familiar rituals, suspension of meaningful opportunities to serve and contribute. These stressors will continue to impact our fruitfulness as a community of faith, even as we move to increase opportunities for connection in the weeks and months ahead.

All of this is a reminder that fruitfulness isn't something we do by force of will. Fruitfulness is a grace - the result of being firmly connected to Christ, our vine, who provides all that we need to produce abundant fruit. And that vine that sustains us, Jesus himself, knows that after times of stress and strain – like these last fourteen months – we will need our soil nurtured, our soul's watered, and lots of Son-light in order to heal and become fruitful again!

Maybe like me, you are aware of how hard it is to be fruitful after the year of stress and trauma many of us have lived through. I take comfort and great hope in remembering that our branches are forever part of Christ, the vine. He will supply all that we need to nourish, sustain, and heal us, until our branches are ready to bear fruit again. I'm also heartened that through Christ, our vine, we are connected through this community of faith where he will continue to tend our soil, water our souls, and allow the Son's light to heal us back into fruitfulness! Thanks be to God for Jesus, the vine!

Pastor Amy

↓ Don't forget to look for this **star Icon** (🌟) to easily identify the newest information each week

**WORSHIP TIME: SUNDAYS 8:30 AM WORSHIP
(FACEBOOK LIVE)**

Are you Ready for Worship? There are now three ways to participate in our Livestream of Sunday worship.

1. [Facebook Live](#) - We encourage you to start your own watch party!
2. [Watch On YouTube](#) - Subscribe to our channel
3. [Livestream on the website](#)



Worship the Living God

Lessons for Sunday, 5/2: 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

Lessons for Sunday, 5/9: 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17

↓ **Celebrate communion on May 2...** Following the communion liturgy (online!), you are invited to make your way to Bethlehem before 11 am to receive the Sacrament. Enter by the front main entrance to the sanctuary (the Perrin Street accessible entrance will also be available for those who need to use the lift). Ushers will direct you once you arrive. We ask all participants to wear a mask and practice physical

distancing. We have taken every precaution to limit physical contact in our communion practice. [View Pastor Amy's video for more details!](#) *If you or a loved one would like to commune but can't make your way to BLC, please let Pastor Amy know.*

↓ **Pentecost Geraniums:** You are invited to order red geraniums (\$6.00 per plant) to help decorate our Sanctuary for Pentecost (May 23). If you would like to order a plant, [order now](#) - forms are due on or before Wednesday, May 5! Contact the church office if you need assistance placing your order!

↓ **Hospitality Team Members Needed!** *In order for in-person worship to happen safely and well, we need your partnership and assistance.* Are you able and willing to be part of a team extending hospitality and assisting our Bethlehem community in following the new protocols and guidance that will be required for these gatherings? Sign up on the BLC Website. We have developed specific guidance and will train you ahead of time so you will know what your role and responsibilities are. Please [sign up here](#) or contact the church office if you would like to serve on a Hospitality Team!

↓ **Mark your Calendar for Music Sunday!** Share in worship on Sunday, **May 16**, as we celebrate by lifting our voices (and instruments) in thanks and praise to God in worship. This is one of many ways that we share our gifts in and through this community.



Grow in Faith and Discipleship

Share in BLC's Midweek Bible Study! Did you know that BLC has a Midweek Bible Study that continues to meet on Wednesdays at 9:30 am via Zoom? You are welcome to join weekly, for a specific series, or on occasion. **Looking for a short-term Bible Study?** On 4/28, we began a six-week study called "Blowing in the Wind", a study about the Holy Spirit. Especially timely as we look forward to Pentecost. Use the 'join now' button in the [Calendar of Events](#) to sign on. If you have questions, or would like more information, contact Kathy Moragne - kathymoragne@gmail.com

↓ **Growing Young: Helping Congregations Authentically Engage Young People**

Thursdays at 7 pm on May 6, 13, 20 and 27 (4 Weeks). Class is **Limited to 50 people**. Led by Abby Mandris, Nick Stroczkowski, Megan Wolling, you can **SIGN UP** here: (<https://forms.gle/QyHPUCamiEomyKpa6>)

"All churches grow old. Strategic churches grow young." - Growing Young Research

This course will introduce participants to the growing young initiative and lead people through the six essential strategies to help young people discover and love your church. This is not a quick fix approach to filling your congregation with young people. This is a culture change process that can lead to deeper and more meaningful relationships within your entire congregation and larger community.

[FULL COURSE DETAILS HERE.](#)



Live Our Faith in Daily Life

↓ **Calling all adults who love our youth!** We are having a conference wide event, Spring Saturday, **May 22** 9am - 9pm at St. Johns Lutheran Church. BLC needs adult chaperones. Please contact Bethany Trippi via email Bethany.trippi@blcfairport.org if you are able to help out. Thank you!

Calling all 6-12 grade youth! As we know Winter Weekend was cancelled this year because of the virus. Due to the decrease in numbers and updated safety precaution updates from the CDC we will be having a 1-day event conference wide: Spring Saturday at St. John's Lutheran Church in Victor on **May 22nd from 9 am – 9 pm!** For those who have not been to a conference event, this is an opportunity to meet Lutheran youth from our area. Confirmation students, those you have met in virtual confirmation class are in our conference and may be joining! We sing, play games, worship, and learn about God together. Families should have received an email from Bethany with more details. Registration and payment (\$40) are due **May 1**. Contact Bethany at bethany.trippi@blcfairport.org for more information!



Care for One Another

↓ **Care for one another in May:** Two of our homebound members have birthdays in May, Betty Harper on the 5th and Linnea Donahower on the 23rd. Mother's Day is the 9th if you care to send a greeting to the ladies on our list! Thanks for your commitment to this ministry! Blessings! For further information on our list of homebound members, please contact Donna Berner at donnaberner@yahoo.com.

Frequent Flier - Do you have a buildup of frequent flier miles that you have been unable to use over the last year? As part of our upcoming 100th anniversary celebrations, we will be welcoming former Bethlehem pastors and musicians in the coming months, and some of them have requested assistance with travel costs. If you have frequent flier miles, you'd be willing to donate (or if you'd be willing to assist in purchasing a ticket), please let Pastor Amy know!



Serve Our Neighbor

As part of the Serve Ministry, **Missions and Social Concerns** reaches out to the world for the purpose of serving our neighbors near and far, especially those who are marginalized and easily forgotten. Our vision includes actively advocating for justice (Micah 6:8: *What does the Lord require of us but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God*)

↓ **Show me the mon\$y:** At our next meeting on Wednesday, **May 12th** at 6 pm, we will be discussing our M&SC budget/spending plan for 2021-2022. This is an excellent opportunity to share your voice on how our financial resources are allocated and how they align with our vision as a BLC community. Who are our neighbors? How might we recognize those who are marginalized and easily forgotten? What does actively advocating for justice mean?

↓ **We Want YOU!** M&SC offers a free Triple AAA membership (Advocacy, Allyship and Activism). Join our committee to learn more about taking full advantage of your member benefits. We continue to meet virtually and invite you to join us for one meeting or many - we welcome you in whatever way you may contribute! Please check the BLC calendar of events and join via the Zoom link. If you have questions or feedback, please contact Julie Owen at jowen@heritagechristianservices.org or 585-766-8728. (See the previous paragraph for details about the next meeting!)

We are grateful to our BLC Community for the role you've played as hunger activists! Throughout the Easter season, you have stepped to the plate to learn more about and act on world hunger. Our hunger activists have stocked the food pantry at the Pines of Perinton weekly with a variety of items. Our commitment continues through May 16th.

- May 2* - toilet paper - #1 Marcy Adams
- May 9 - toilet paper - #1 Lil Lassen Ward, #2 Mark Gaul
- May 16 - Anything! - #1 GerryAnn Westcott. #2 Kathy Forney

For more information, please visit <https://blcfairport.org/world-hunger-appeal>. BLC's member contribution to World Hunger will be dedicated at the Synod Assembly in June. Our/your role as hunger activists doesn't end here! Please consider how you may continue to address the need - HUNGER NEVER ENDS. Please consider adding an item or two to your grocery list each week and making a stop at the little food pantry in the Pines!

What's Next? We're exploring ways to continue our conversations on racial justice over the summer months. And we are beginning conversations on God's Work Our Hands in the Fall. Share your thoughts and stay tuned for more!



Council News

↓ **We've Been Listening!** The community of Bethlehem is not faint-hearted! In rain and cold (and at least once, sun!) you braved the elements as we gathered to hear from one another. Many others have shared thoughts through individual calls or emails. We give thanks for the estimated 59 households and 88 individuals who shared comments, concerns and questions. Your input will be reviewed and categorized by members of the Core Ministry Team and Council and we will determine next steps as we continue to plan for *Gathering Again!* Look on our [Gathering Again page](#) of the BLC Website for the most up-to-date information.

Re-Opening Team –Watch your email in the days ahead for information about the resumption of in-person worship at Bethlehem in May! Look for updated information on the [Gathering Again page](#) on our website. The Re-Opening team meets next on Tuesday, **May 11** at 6:30 pm. Members include: Matt Beutel, Brian Edwards, Margie Gaul, Kristina Henry, Julie Owen, Bob Stolze, Rick Walker, and Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson.

↓ **Computer Volunteers Needed...** Have you enjoyed sharing in worship from home the past year? As we gradually begin to gather in person on Sundays, the livestream broadcast will continue to be available. Now, the small group of volunteers who have worked behind the scenes would like to share tasks with other BLC members. What you can do:

- **Volunteer at Home** - an easy job you can do from home will take no more than an hour each week on your home computer. 4 volunteers needed (to share shifts).
- **Sunday Morning Video Players** - do you know how to play YouTube videos? Volunteers at 8:30 am cue the Children's Message and other videos on the big screen. 3 volunteers needed.
- **Sunday Morning Livestream Producer** - we currently have two people who handle the technology to bring worship to your living room every Sunday. A third has stepped up and is beginning to learn. It would be wonderful to have a fourth volunteer to work one Sunday each month.

Contact Team Leader Andy Gates at livestreaming@blcfairport.org to learn more.

Community News

Ways to Serve: In 1993 the ELCA made a public commitment, through the Social Statement "**Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, Justice,**" to "answer the call to justice and commit ourselves to its principles **participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability** (page 8)." The statement outlines ways for individuals and worshipping communities to be intentional in its commitment to the work of caring for Earth. It is our continuing responsibility to **seek intentional ways to care for creation and to emphasize that commitment in our communal life as congregations and synods.** Please use the **resources below** to build that awareness in your communities as we approach Earth Day and every day after that. As a synod **we will be creating a Creation Care Task Force** so that we can deepen our commitment to ministry and advocacy of creation care. If this work is of particular interest to you please consider being a part of the Creation Care Task Force. Please use [this form](#) to let Bishop Macholz know of your possible interest in being part of this team.

We Ask Your Prayers: *We pray for those whose thanks or needs are known to us.*

We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:

- The birth of Ethan Wang born 3/28. Ethan is the son of David and Amy Wang and little brother to Stella

We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

- Lysay Smith (friend of Jackie Stivers) who died on 4/24
- Karen Miller (friend of Carol Schrader) who died on 4/9
- Steve Donner who died on 4/12
- Father George Heyman who died on 4/16, especially our sisters and brothers in Christ at the Roman Catholic parishes of Assumption and Resurrection

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Dan Juers who is hospitalized
- Madison (granddaughter of Linda Keefer) who is having surgery on 5/4
- Waverly, friend of Phyllis Stock as she seeks a kidney donor
- Those who are involved with the ongoing work of caregiving for loved ones
- Those who are infected with or recovering from Coronavirus, and their caregivers
 - Michele & Joe Benjamin (friends of Donna & Jim Berner)

↓ **We Pray for Each Other** – Each Sunday in worship we give thanks and offer prayers for those in our community whose celebrations or needs are known to us. Requests for prayers are shared in our monthly prayer listing as well, with updates available the first Sunday of each month. If you have a prayer request or an update of an existing prayer need for yourself, a family member, or friend, you can easily submit them digitally via the "pew card" at <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/>. Alternately they can be shared by contacting the church office or a pastor.

[Click here to view and print the May long-term prayer listing](#) – or contact the church office for a copy!

Calendar for week of May 2 – May 9

(Last updated on 4/28/21 at 12 noon, visit <https://blcfairport.org/event-directory/> for updates)

Sunday, May 2

8:30 am Facebook Livestream
Worship followed by Holy Communion – the sanctuary will be open for people to receive communion until 11 am
7:30 pm Zoom* LYO
([Join](#) or use ID 818 2417 6546)

Monday, May 3

6:00 pm Virtual Youth Choir
([Join](#) or use ID 816 9461 2911)
6:30 pm BSA Troop 208

Tuesday, May 4

Wednesday, May 5

BLC Office Closed **
9:30 am Zoom* Bible Study
([Join](#) or use ID 943 3691 2942)
9:30 am Education Planning Meeting
([Join](#) or use ID 871 8823 9638)
10:30 am Liturgy Planning for Pentecost
([Join](#) or use ID 821 6886 0433)
1:00 pm Zoom* Men's Lunch
([Join](#) or use ID 874 8853 3240)
6:30 pm BLC Officer's Meeting
([Join](#) or use ID 814 2532 5342)
6:30 pm Chancel Bells
7:30 pm Zoom* Chancel Choir Rehearsal
([Join](#) or use ID 869 2314 9200)

Thursday, May 6

10:00 am CMT Meeting
([Join](#) or use ID 825 5536 5823)
6:30 pm CMT/Council Meeting
([Join](#) or use ID 894 8717 7047)

Friday, May 7

Pastor's Sabbath

10:00 am Folk Group Rehearsal
3:00 pm Dulcimer Group Rehearsal

Saturday, May 8

9:15 am Property Committee Meeting

Sunday, May 9

Baptism at 8:30 am

8:30 am Facebook Livestream Worship
10:00 am In-person Worship
([Reservation required](#))
7:30 pm LYO

****Beth Schoenfeld will be out of the office on Wednesday, May 5.** Pastor Amy remains available and can be reached by phone when she is not in the office.

For additional details about any of the meetings, events and activities listed above contact the church office!

Church Office Hours: We continue to hold remote office hours M-F from 9 am to 12 noon. During these times, please call (585) 223-0634 to reach us directly, otherwise you may continue to email us at office@blcfairport.org and we'll respond as we're able. For further assistance or urgent pastoral care needs outside of office hours, please call the office and leave a message on the pastoral care line. Pastor Amy remains available by phone and email at other times.

***Zoom Meetings at BLC:** The easiest way to join is to use the direct link available in the [Calendar of Events](#) on our website. If you don't see your meeting in the Calendar of Events or have questions, please contact your group leader or the church office for assistance or additional details!

***Worshiping In-Person:** To accommodate our sanctuary capacity limits, we are currently requiring reservations for worship. You may [reserve space here](#) (the link is also available on BLC's [Share in Worship page](#)). If you need assistance making a reservation or don't have internet access, please contact the church office.

Announcements for the STAR should be submitted through the office by Wednesday morning at 9 am. Visit www.blcfairport.org and to sign up for reminders and special announcements (including the STAR!)



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