



Bear Facts

The Weekly Newsletter of
Bethany Lutheran School
Long Beach, CA
www.bethanylutheran.org

Communication+Responsibility+Organization+Service+Sharing



FROM THE PRINCIPAL



There's a fire-hydrant of information coming our way these days...it's overwhelming, right? In fact, I feel a slight twinge of guilt even WRITING something that adds to your load! (Including a very well-written post from a psychologist that's included with today's Bear Facts.) But....

I'm so glad I live in the information age...can you imagine doing the "Safer at Home" thing with no technology and no way to stay in touch with friends and family? In fact, we need to remind ourselves how blessed we are because that is not true everywhere. Think about those with no skills or access. Think about others in the world who are less fortunate:

A view from an Indian doctor:

"Social distancing is a privilege. It means you live in a house large enough to practise it. Hand washing is a privilege too. It means you have access to running water. Hand sanitisers are a privilege. It means you have money to buy them. Lockdowns are a privilege. It means you can afford to be at home. Most of the ways to ward the Corona off are accessible only to the affluent. In essence, a disease that was spread by the rich as they flew around the globe will now kill millions of the poor. All of us who are practising social distancing and have imposed a lockdown on ourselves must appreciate how privileged we are. Many Indians won't be able to do any of this."

That tweet really put things in perspective for me and drove me to prayer in thankfulness for my blessings and supplication for those who will struggle mightily in the days ahead.

**We miss you.
Be safe.
You are loved.
Dr. Fink**

Parent Teacher Conferences were cancelled, but please contact your child's teacher if you have concerns!



Our Easter Sees Candy Fundraiser is cancelled. ☹️

But if you want to support the Sees chocolate bunny-makers during this crisis, you **can** order Sees online: <https://www.sees.com/customer-service/ordering/>



School Bulletin #29

Mar. 31, 2020

DON'T FORGET

We will keep you posted regarding calendar plans. As you know, things are changing day-by-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute!

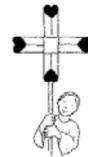
amazon smile

Did you know you can support Bethany Lutheran School every time you shop on Amazon? You may be making LOTS of Amazon purchases during this crisis and every purchase could be supporting our school! Use this link to get started!

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-2111043>

Chapel

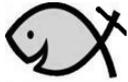
We will post a chapel service each week on Wednesdays so we can be united in worship! This week Miss Stejskal and some of her good friends will bring us the message.



The federal government has extended stay-at-home orders through the end of April. Bethany's Board of Schools will be meeting (virtually) tonight and will determine our calendar moving forward.

We will be in touch with an update tomorrow!

You may have noticed a few teachers still teaching from their classrooms because this is what is best for accomplishing e-learning for their students. Rest assured that they are quarantined in their own classrooms and that strict social-distancing protocols are in place. If you would like to see a copy of those protocols, please reach out to Dr. Fink



The FISHin' Hole
Opportunities to Serve

Parents, of all the things to stress about right now, FISH Hours should not be on your list. Please don't give it a second thought. ☺

Middle School Corner

We are encouraging the Middle School students to look for ways to make the most of their online learning experience.

Here's a list of several ways to do just that! Every student went over this list at the beginning of the year and we're circling back to encourage them to choose a couple of these to work on from home.

1. Get up and dressed on your own- no parent wake-up assistance
2. Make your own breakfast
3. Make your own lunch
4. Do some cooking and some cleaning
5. Do your own laundry
6. Do assigned chores that do not include the ones listed above
7. Choose to participate in at least one activity outside of academics
8. Get ready for school on your own- remember the things you need for the day
9. Do homework on your own (online learning with some support of parents when needed)
10. Talk to your teachers to get clarification on assignments, ask for help, ask questions about grades received
11. Be able to handle money
12. Able to get around (navigate) by yourself

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..."
Colossians 3:23

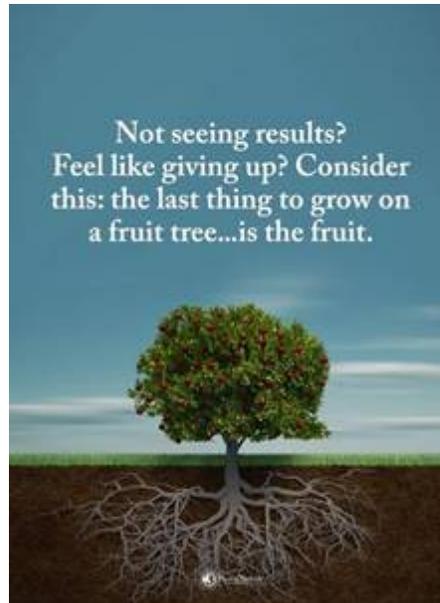
SPRING FEVER!



Bethany Lutheran Church Worship

Our church services will be online for the next two weeks. Watch for links to recorded services on the Bethany website for Wednesday evening and Sunday morning.

Are you in need of pastoral care? Please call the church office: 421-4711



"Not seeing results? Feel like giving up? Consider this: the last thing to grow on a fruit tree... is the fruit."

What day is it? Tuesday? Could be Friday for all I know – they all blend together at this point! Day after day at home – sometimes I couldn't tell you the last time I actually got out of the house!

In the midst of this new normal we're experiencing, I have begun to feel like I'm making zero progress. Whether it be with the house projects, the kids' schedules, the home study programs, my new work at home set-up, or a regular dinner plan. I kind of feel like we're just wandering with no real destination right now.

Perhaps with the uncertainty of when this will all end, that's normal, but it drives my usual driven self a little crazy! I need results, items checked off my To-Do list and progress!

BUT... I always find a way to remind myself that God is in charge. He's got this. He saw this coming, He prepared us for it, gave us the tools to survive it and sees where we're headed next. **He's building roots.** And roots come first, then the tree – THEN the fruit. Breathe, friends, and know that fruit is coming – from our Father who has this in His hands.

Hang in there, BearFam!

Jen Carlson, PTL President

Seeking gently-used jewelry and accessories!

Student Success will once again be hosting our gently-used accessories sale on **Saturday, May 16** during the Bethany Block Party and Sunday Morning, May 17 between services.

Are you cleaning closets while you are sheltering in place? Please save your gently-used accessories (jewelry, scarves, handbags, belts, etc.) and drop them off for Jill Moorman when school is back in session. Separately-bagged items are greatly appreciated. (Items remaining after the sale will be donated to a worthy cause.)

If you would like to help with this sale, please contact Jill Moorman: jmoorman@bethanylutheran.org
562-307-6123

Bethany Parents, you may have seen this on social media. It's too good not to share!

From a psychologist:

After having thirty-one sessions this week with patients where the singular focus was COVID-19 and how to cope, I decided to consolidate my advice and make a list that I hope is helpful to all. I can't control a lot of what is going on right now, but I can contribute this. (I am surprised and heartened that this has been shared so widely! People have asked me to credential myself, so to that end, I am a doctoral level Psychologist in NYS with a Psy.D. in the specialities of School and Clinical Psychology.)

MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS TIPS FOR QUARANTINE

- 1. Stick to a routine.** Go to sleep and wake up at a reasonable time, write a schedule that is varied and includes time for work as well as self-care.
- 2. Dress for the social life you want, not the social life you have.** Get showered and dressed in comfortable clothes, wash your face, brush your teeth. Take the time to do a bath or a facial. Put on some bright colors. It is amazing how our dress can impact our mood.
- 3. Get out at least once a day, for at least thirty minutes.** If you are concerned of contact, try first thing in the morning, or later in the evening, and try less traveled streets and avenues. If you are high risk or living with those who are high risk, open the windows and blast the fan. It is amazing how much fresh air can do for spirits.
- 4. Find some time to move each day, again daily for at least thirty minutes.** If you don't feel comfortable going outside, there are many YouTube videos that offer free movement classes, and if all else fails, turn on the music and have a dance party!
- 5. Reach out to others, you guessed it, at least once daily for thirty minutes.** Try to do FaceTime, Skype, phone calls, texting—connect with other people to seek and provide support. Don't forget to do this for your children as well. Set up virtual playdates with friends daily via FaceTime, Facebook Messenger Kids, Zoom, etc—your kids miss their friends, too!
- 6. Stay hydrated and eat well.** This one may seem obvious, but stress and eating often don't mix well, and we find ourselves over-indulging, forgetting to eat, and avoiding food. Drink plenty of water, eat some good and nutritious foods, and challenge yourself to learn how to cook something new!
- 7. Develop a self-care toolkit.** This can look different for everyone. A lot of successful self-care strategies involve a sensory component (seven senses: touch, taste, sight, hearing, smell, vestibular (movement) and proprioceptive (comforting pressure). An idea for each: a soft blanket or stuffed animal, a hot chocolate, photos of vacations, comforting music, lavender or eucalyptus oil, a small swing or rocking chair, a weighted blanket. A journal, an inspirational book, or a mandala coloring book is wonderful, bubbles to blow or blowing watercolor on paper through a straw are visually appealing as well as work on controlled breath. Mint gum, Listerine strips, ginger ale, frozen Starburst, ice packs, and cold are also good for anxiety regulation. For children, it is great to help them create a self-regulation comfort box (often a shoe-box or bin they can decorate) that they can use on the ready for first-aid when overwhelmed.
- 8. Spend extra time playing with children.** Children will rarely communicate how they are feeling, but will often make a bid for attention and communication through play. Don't be surprised to see therapeutic themes of illness, doctor visits, and isolation play through. Understand that play is cathartic and helpful for children—it is how they process their world and problem solve, and there's a lot they are seeing and experiencing in the now.
- 9. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, and a wide berth.** A lot of cooped up time can bring out the worst in everyone. Each person will have moments when they will not be at their best. It is important to move with grace through blowups, to not show up to every argument you are invited to, and to not hold grudges and continue disagreements. Everyone is doing the best they can to make it through this.
- 10. Everyone find their own retreat space.** Space is at a premium, particularly with city living. It is important that people think through their own separate space for work and for relaxation. For children, help them identify a place where they can go

to retreat when stressed. You can make this place cozy by using blankets, pillows, cushions, scarves, beanbags, tents, and “forts”. It is good to know that even when we are on top of each other, we have our own special place to go to be alone.

11. Expect behavioral issues in children, and respond gently. We are all struggling with disruption in routine, none more than children, who rely on routines constructed by others to make them feel safe and to know what comes next. Expect increased anxiety, worries and fears, nightmares, difficulty separating or sleeping, testing limits, and meltdowns. Do not introduce major behavioral plans or consequences at this time—hold stable and focus on emotional connection.

12. Focus on safety and attachment. We are going to be living for a bit with the unprecedented demand of meeting all work deadlines, homeschooling children, running a sterile household, and making a whole lot of entertainment in confinement. We can get wrapped up in meeting expectations in all domains, but we must remember that these are scary and unpredictable times for children. Focus on strengthening the connection through time spent following their lead, through physical touch, through play, through therapeutic books, and via verbal reassurances that you will be there for them in this time.

13. Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance. This idea is connected with #12. We are doing too many things in this moment, under fear and stress. This does not make a formula for excellence. Instead, give yourself what psychologists call “radical self acceptance”: accepting everything about yourself, your current situation, and your life without question, blame, or pushback. You cannot fail at this—there is no roadmap, no precedent for this, and we are all truly doing the best we can in an impossible situation.

14. Limit social media and COVID conversation, especially around children. One can find tons of information on COVID-19 to consume, and it changes minute to minute. The information is often sensationalized, negatively skewed, and alarmist. Find a few trusted sources that you can check in with consistently, limit it to a few times a day, and set a time limit for yourself on how much you consume (again 30 minutes tops, 2-3 times daily). Keep news and alarming conversations out of earshot from children—they see and hear everything, and can become very frightened by what they hear.

15. Notice the good in the world, the helpers. There is a lot of scary, negative, and overwhelming information to take in regarding this pandemic. There are also a ton of stories of people sacrificing, donating, and supporting one another in miraculous ways. It is important to counter-balance the heavy information with the hopeful information.

16. Help others. Find ways, big and small, to give back to others. Support restaurants, offer to grocery shop, check in with elderly neighbors, write psychological wellness tips for others—helping others gives us a sense of agency when things seem out of control.

17. Find something you can control, and control the heck out of it. In moments of big uncertainty and overwhelm, control your little corner of the world. Organize your bookshelf, purge your closet, put together that furniture, group your toys. It helps to anchor and ground us when the bigger things are chaotic.

18. Find a long-term project to dive into. Now is the time to learn how to play the keyboard, put together a huge jigsaw puzzle, start a 15 hour game of Risk, paint a picture, read the Harry Potter series, binge watch an 8-season show, crochet a blanket, solve a Rubix cube, or develop a new town in Animal Crossing. Find something that will keep you busy, distracted, and engaged to take breaks from what is going on in the outside world.

19. Engage in repetitive movements and left-right movements. Research has shown that repetitive movement (knitting, coloring, painting, clay sculpting, jump roping etc) especially left-right movement (running, drumming, skating, hopping) can be effective at self-soothing and maintaining self-regulation in moments of distress.

20. Find an expressive art and go for it. Our emotional brain is very receptive to the creative arts, and it is a direct portal for release of feeling. Find something that is creative (sculpting, drawing, dancing, music, singing, playing) and give it your all. See how relieved you can feel. It is a very effective way of helping kids to emote and communicate as well!

21. Find lightness and humor in each day. There is a lot to be worried about, and with good reason. Counterbalance this heaviness with something funny each day: cat videos on YouTube, a stand-up show on Netflix, a funny movie—we all need a little comedic relief in our day, every day.

22. *****Reach out for help—your team is there for you.** If you have a therapist or psychiatrist, they are available to you, even at a distance. Keep up your medications and your therapy sessions the best you can. If you are having difficulty coping, seek out help for the first time. There are mental health people on the ready to help you through this crisis. Your children’s teachers and related service providers will do anything within their power to help, especially for those parents tasked with the difficult task of being a whole treatment team to their child with special challenges. Seek support groups of fellow home-schoolers, parents, and neighbors to feel connected. There is help and support out there, any time of the day—although we are physically distant, we can always connect virtually.

23. **“Chunk” your quarantine, take it moment by moment.** We have no road map for this. We don’t know what this will look like in 1 day, 1 week, or 1 month from now. Often, when I work with patients who have anxiety around overwhelming issues, I suggest that they engage in a strategy called “chunking”—focusing on whatever bite-sized piece of a challenge that feels manageable. Whether that be 5 minutes, a day, or a week at a time—find what feels doable for you, and set a time stamp for how far ahead in the future you will let yourself worry. Take each chunk one at a time, and move through stress in pieces.

24. **Remind yourself daily that this is temporary.** It seems in the midst of this quarantine that it will never end. It is terrifying to think of the road stretching ahead of us. Please take time to remind yourself that although this is very scary and difficult, and will go on for an undetermined amount of time, it is a season of life and it will pass. We will return to feeling free, safe, busy, and connected in the days ahead.

25. **Find the lesson.** This whole crisis can seem sad, senseless, and at times, avoidable. When psychologists work with trauma, a key feature to helping someone work through said trauma is to help them find their agency, the potential positive outcomes they can effect, the meaning and construction that can come out of destruction. What can each of us learn here, in big and small ways, from this crisis? What needs to change in ourselves, our homes, our communities, our nation, and our world?

*****We’re here for you, Bethany Family! If you need access to counselors, pastoral help, a listening ear...let us know!**