

LIGHT OF THE TIMES

The Dominy's Doodle

A Letter from Sherwin

"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." - Job 13.15 New International Version

The "Dominy" (pronounced DOE-min-ee) was the title my grandparent's generation gave to the pastor of the church. It had roots in the old Dutch traditions in which I was raised. The "Dominy" in farming communities, along with the country physician, were the only ones with higher education and as the physician was expected to have all the answers about what ails you, the Dominy was expected to have all the answers regarding the things of God. It was a high calling to which no Dominy has ever been able to achieve, including this one.

One summer was particularly rough when I was a young child. The price of live pork had dropped to below 20 cents a pound, creating devastation in that industry. The price of beef had also dropped drastically. It was a year of bumper crops, but the grain surplus crashed the market and it looked like many farmers would be going bankrupt. A harsh winter followed and then a year of drought which devastated that part of the great plains where irrigation does not happen.

Special prayer meetings were held. But the dark times persisted. The Dominy, in charge of leading the prayer meetings, did the best that he could. But I heard comments like, "What does he know about hard times? He just sits in his study writing sermons about how we should be thankful for all this." It was a challenge even to the most faithful.

I wish I had adequate explanations for the pandemic. I see it effecting individual lives all around me. People are required to cover their faces to go into Wesco and any other business. Students at Grand Valley are randomly tested. Our local schools have been required to use virtual teaching. There is a sense of unrest and dissatisfaction with life. Some folks have gotten very sick. Some have died.

I see how it has affected the church. We are missing the fellowship of the church. The before and after conversations of worship services do not happen on the same scale that it once did and I miss it. I miss coffee and windmill cookies. The children's ministry is on hold and the consistory is waiting for a break in the pandemic to bring it back. Baptisms are being conducted privately, with consistory approval. We've gone into making videos and while that has presented a host of new challenges, the learning curve has been good. We're communicating with many more people than before, just not in person. I think videos will last beyond the pandemic and that may be a good way of reaching people. But we long for a return to normal, however we might remember it.

I see how the pandemic is affecting faith. Besides giving cause to ingratitude, irritability and fear, it seems some folks are struggling simply to trust in God as we go through this. When we initially shut down, now 36 weeks ago, I started to pray for an end to the pandemic. It seems that God has resolutely said "no" or "not yet" to my prayers. I worry for the future of the church and my prayers remain answered with a "not yet." The pandemic has only inconvenienced me personally. Many have suffered far worse. I wish I had the faith of Job so I could say what he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him."

Trials and tests should never be wasted. Although we can't understand the "why" of this pandemic, maybe we can ask ourselves an important question: "What can we learn from this?" "How can I use this pandemic to make me a better person, a better follower of Jesus?" For now, maybe that needs to be our focus.

One of my favorite books is The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis. In this novel, an experienced demon named Screwtape is corresponding with a rookie demon named Wormwood. The demon's cause was to destroy the human's faith in their enemy, which is Jesus. One statement Screwtape makes has often strengthened my faith:

"Be not deceived, Wormwood, our cause is never more in jeopardy than when a human, no longer desiring but still intending to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe in which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."

My prayer now is that all of you experience a determined strengthening of your faith. Thanks for hanging in there with me. Let's continue to grow in the faith together. Your "Dominy" is thankful for you.

LBC News

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Adopt-a-Family

Our Adopt-a-Family Christmas giving tree will be up and decorated with ornaments on Sunday, November 22. This community-wide outreach has helped to make Christmas a little brighter for over 200 of our needy northside Muskegon children who live in the Reeths-Puffer, Holton and North Muskegon districts. This year presents many challenges due to Covid-1 but despite these trying times, we are dedicated to making sure that our neighboring children are able to open a few Christmas gifts this year. To that end, we ask that members support this important cause by either:

***Taking a gift tag or two from our Giving Tree if you are attending services

***Stopping in during office hours to take your tag(s)

***Making a financial donation so that we can provide a gift to a child. Send to Laketon Bethel Adopt-a-Family fund

***You can sign up to help online at laketonbethel.org. Click on the Ministries tab and look for "Adopt-a-Family Form". Fill out and submit the form and someone will contact you with the information you need regarding the child you will be shopping for.

***Gifts and donations must be brought back by **December 13th** for distribution.

***Contacting a coordinator (preferably by text) and we will send you instructions and information about a child in need of adoption.

Cheryl: 231-670-5476

Connie: 231-740-0818

Jenny: 231-638-0340

This is a difficult year for so many of our neighboring families. Please join us to make sure that no child will be forgotten in 2020.

LBC Coat & Winter Gear Drive

We are collecting gently used coats, hats, mittens/gloves, and scarves starting on Sunday, November 1st - November 29th. You may drop off your donations on Sundays from 9am-12pm and on Tuesdays-Fridays from 9am-12pm.

Join Online Giving

You can help us keep Laketon Bethel financially healthy by joining a growing number (64%) of members and guests that are giving online.

You may have been devoted to giving with cash or check through the offering plate. Maybe some of you only give when you come to church on Sunday. In these difficult times it is important to know how to give digitally to Laketon Bethel. Even though some of you may be apprehensive to give in a new way, it can still be easy for you.

Here is a video tutorial you can use if considering giving digitally for the first time.

<https://vimeo.com/323573572/d77e842b>

LBC Children's Church

The Children's Ministry team miss you all so much! We hope that you all are happy and well!

We are working on a Reopening Safety Plan for our students. Once completed, you will receive an email from me mapping out every detail to ensure our children's safety.

Currently, we are doing fun video lessons that can be found on the Laketon Bethel Kids and Youth page. Check it out!

Blessings,

Children's Ministry Team



LBC Family Announcements

September - November Special Senior Birthdays:

Jean Moore - September 23

Ardie Pulsipher - October 12

Donna Doctor - October 18

Jackie Buck - October 24

Mary Birr - November 23

Happy Birthday!

LBC Family Memorials/Committals

Gloria Arter-August 16

Jerry Dekker-September 11

Alice Babinec-September 12

Muriel Wiser-October 12

Laketon Bethel's Core Values

A. ACCEPTANCE:

Everyone, regardless of who they are, what they have done, or what they are doing, will be accepted here. Laketon Bethel will be a safe place to explore your relationship with Jesus.

B. BIBLE:

The Bible is the final authority for faith and practice. We will study it with open minds and the best scholarship available.

C. CONNECTION:

We invite people to connect with Jesus and with each other in all that we do.

Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. 1 Corinthians 13:13