

BETHANY LUTHERAN

Newsletter

December 2022



I certainly am aware of the change in seasons this year. This first snow is always beautiful but seems soon no matter when it is. Like how the world around us has seasons, life itself has seasons, and the Church has seasons too. The season of the church year that we are beginning now is called Advent. This is a shortened version of a Latin phrase, *Adventus Domini*. I have been told that this translates as ‘the arriving of the Lord.’ I would like to share with you some ponderings about this season of Advent and what it means to get ready for the Lord.

When is it to soon to get ready for the arriving of the Lord? I smile inside a little bit every time I hear people discussing how ‘early’ Christmas is. When I was a new pastor, I overheard someone sharing some frustration about when Christmas items show up in stores. I had traveled to Costa Rica to visit a seminary friend and meet the communities she was serving the previous September. The stores had begun to sell Christmas items. Costa Rica, and much of the world, does not celebrate a Thanksgiving holiday or Halloween. The seasonal item spaces in Costa Rican stores fill with the things people use to celebrate Christmas in September. Having these things available for purchase so soon did not seem to hamper holiday cheer in the actual celebration of Christmas from my pastor friends’ perspective.

When is it to soon to get ready for the arriving of the Lord? I remember discussions from probably thirty+ years ago among people at my home congregation about whether it should be permitted to sing Christmas hymns during the season of Advent. Many of the people thought that Advent needed to be like Lent and that we should only sing the special Advent hymns during the season. Others thought that it would be good for the congregation to sing Christmas hymns for longer than the season of Christmas. Pastor Bauman, who seemed to like somber things, was with the first group. I remember how it was a big deal the year that worship committee talked Pastor Bauman into allowing the closing hymn each Sunday of Advent to be a Christmas carol. We will likely sing some Christmas hymns during Advent at Bethany. I also have to admit that as a Pastor I enjoy when the secular world begins to play songs and display decorations for Christmas. This means that even those outside the Church hold this time as special.

When is it to soon to get ready for the arriving of the Lord... especially when the Lord in question is Jesus of Nazareth? Perhaps it is never to early. Getting ready is about more than singing songs and making things look nice. Because Christ is always coming into the world, we are always needing to prepare room in our hearts for the true Kings of Kings. There may be a lot of hustle and bustle for you this holiday season or you may miss the days when life was busier for you this time of year. For most people Christmas is joyful but it can also be a time when some people struggle with feelings of loss. In any case, it is never to early to make room in your heart and home for Jesus.

God Bless,
Pastor Joan



The picture showed a small, white haired elderly man sitting at a large desk, pen in hand, signing a document with tears running down his cheeks. The man was Louie Reinke. Louie had owned a small manufacturing company that survived the Depression and prospered during World War II. After the war, he sold his company and used the money to build, with two partners, a boys camp in central Wisconsin. Louie never married. He taught Sunday school for 50 years. You see, Louie loved children. Boys camps fell out of favor in the 1950's and the camp closed. Louie took all his savings and bought his partners out so that they would not lose all their money. Then he gave his beautiful camp - worth hundreds of thousands of dollars - the result of a lifetime of hard work - to the children of his church.

And why was he crying? Through his sobs, he said he was crying because he had no more to give to the children. I worked at that camp for two summers and eventually was the Camp Board Chairman. Louie is the "gold standard" that I humbly measure myself against. Dick

Sunday School News

Thank you so much to all of the students who participated in singing and fellowship on November 20th! Our focus has now shifted to Christmas. On **Saturday, December 3rd** we invite all youth (Sunday school, confirmation and high school age) to come for a time of fellowship from **3pm-5pm**. We are planning to make ornaments, decorate cookies, and enjoy Christmas music. During Sunday school we are now preparing for the Christmas program, which will be during the church service on **Sunday, December 18th**.

Interested in setting up online giving? It's so easy! Here's how:



From your computer, go to the Bethany website www.bethanymauston.com.

- Locate the blue strip on the top right of the page and click the button that says "Make a Contribution", and this button will take you to the online giving page. If it's your first time you will need to set up an account.
- Your user name is your e-mail and then you create a password and a four digit PIN that will be used to log on each time you give. Once you are logged in you will be on the giving page. Enter the amount you wish to give in the box and use the drop down menu on the right to designate where you want your donation to go.
- You can set it up to have the funds paid from your bank account or from a credit card. Fees apply to your giving but the fees are less if you pay from your bank account. For example, a \$10 gift has a .30 fee, \$25 has a .38 fee, and \$100 has a .75 fee. You can choose to cover these fees by checking the box "cover fees" and your entire giving will go to Bethany. If you do not cover the fees, they will be covered by Bethany from your gift.
- You can make a one-time gift and go in each week, month, etc. to do your giving **or** you can make a recurring gift by checking the box and choosing the frequency you want to give.
- If you are using your phone to access the website, your screen will look a little different. At the top of the screen tap on the three blue lines next to "Select page". Scroll through the choices in the yellow box and at the bottom there is a choice to "Make a Contribution". From there you can follow the directions above for setting up your account and making your gift.

If you have any questions or need help setting this up, contact the office and they will have someone contact you to help with the process.

November Council Highlights

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Pastor's Report - Pastor reported she has been visiting those shut-ins who wanted a visit.

Executive – Julie Graewin is back as our “Winter Secretary” while Marie McDonough heads to Florida for the winter.

- **Finance and Properties** - The Committee approved mission support of \$500 to the LaCrosse Synod/ELCA, \$65 to Lutheran Social Services and \$60 to the Mauston Food Pantry. The committee will meet December 6th to put the 2023 Budget together.
- Our big savings was the moving of Pastor Joan ourselves, saving over \$4000.
- The committee continues to work on the drain gutter bids. There are some complaints about the sound system and it is being investigated.
- Bethany entered into an agreement with Robert Bohnert to assist the Financial Secretary on an as needed basis when Quick Books requires professional knowledge and skills.

Faith Development -

- **Sunday School** November 20th the children will be singing and participating in the Lord's Prayer during worship. And then serving fellowship afterwards. Practicing for the Christmas program will begin in a few weeks. They also worked on making veterans day cards.
- **Confirmation** The Confirmation students are planning a Souper Bowl soup and sandwich meal for Super Bowl Sunday. It is a fundraiser, but exactly where the profits will go has not been decided. The class is also planning a worship service at which they will fill every role, including the message.
- **Worship** – Looking ahead to the Christmas schedule - there will be Christmas Eve Services at 4:00p.m. and 8:00p.m. and a Christmas Day Service at 9:30 a.m.
- The Paschal Candle will return on Christ the King Sunday and be there most of the church year.
- Pastor will hand the bread during communion to congregation members. This is what our theology supports. Pastor always sanitizes her hands at the start of communion. The communion packets are still available those who wish to use them. If anyone wishes to make the bread for communion, contact Mary Pirwitz.
- There is not an age requirement in ELCA “The Book of Rules” for communion. There could be a Palm Sunday class for students who are interested and First Communion on Maundy Thursday. Pastor Joan is available for an adult class for any adults interested.
- Poinsettias will be offered for purchase for the Christmas services.
- Some children in our local school districts are not getting lunch. The federal government has stopped giving grants for those who do not have money in their school meal account. The amount of funding is way more than we can provide as a congregation, but we could partner with other community groups.

Hospitality – – Helping with the Community Drive-Thru meal on November 23th.



THANK YOU to everyone who helped make our November Community dinner a success. We served 168 people. That's our biggest turnout yet! We couldn't have done it without the willing volunteers who said “I can do that”. Thank you to the food preparers, the servers, the delivery drivers, the behind the scenes planners, and members who came by for a meal or helped spread the word to friends and family. Also thanks go out to Thrivent for helping sponsor this event. Many hands really do make light work.

December Birthdays

Russell Dillin	12/01
Austin Remington	12/01
Jodi Hoffman	12/02
Emma Ragan	12/02
Tammy Zoller	12/02
Lila Goetzke	12/03
Ken Sanford	12/04
Charitee Seebecker	12/04
Robert Bohnert	12/05
Jack Luehman	12/05
Pam Holmes	12/06
Alyssa Kidd	12/07
Marissa Nava	12/08
Sara Barton	12/09
Brody Holzberger	12/09
Glen Schroeder	12/09
Marjo Staehling	12/10
Norma Miller	12/11
Wayne Morris	12/11
Tammy Remington	12/13
Jacob Schiller	12/16
Larry Arens	12/17
Charlotte Lyman	12/18
Brian Colwell	12/20
Ruth Marose	12/21
Myles Miller	12/21
Patti Thomas	12/21
JoAnn Gensch	12/22
Wendy McGuire	12/22
Dawn Hess	12/23
Michaela Honnold	12/23
Jean Schurmann	12/23
Brian McGuire	12/24
Madelin Buda	12/27
Mark Benson	12/28
Craig Dallman	12/28
Richard Noe	12/31

December Anniversaries

Brandon and Sally Luehman	12/09
Wally and Ray Feldman	12/23
Robert and Ruth Pfaff	12/25
Jim and Teri Webster	12/29



Food Pantry News

We are asking everyone that wishes to make a much needed donation to the pantry during the following months, please do so with cash donations, if possible. We are able to purchase food at a much lower cost than you can buy it at the store and it enables us to get what we are short of when we need it. Thank you for considering this.

There is a Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) Holiday Train in Mauston this year! They will be making their usual donation to us. Thank Goodness. The date is set for Dec. 10 at 4PM at the Division Street crossing as usual. The Bank of Mauston will be matching donations for this as well.

Please know that the office does not have every member's information. Please contact the office with corrections and updates.

Thank you for your understanding, patience, and help in keeping our records up to date!
608-847-6690

In Our Prayers

Harlow Gierhart and family, the Meryle Henry family, Rod Pink, the Dale Dunnigan family, the Steven Hans family, Angela Bollig, Randy Mullenberg, Dianne Peterson, Ken Plants, Terry Prescott, Donna Christensen, Dennis Stark, Bill Voltz, the Dillin family, and the people of Ukraine.

Please call the church office, 608-847-6690, if you know of someone who needs to be added to our prayer list or with any Pastoral Care needs/requests. This list is different than our prayer chain.

Bethany's Prayer Chain Coordinator is Audrey Gierhart (608-847-4106).
If you have an urgent prayer request, call her to share the request.

*****Unless otherwise noted, all worship services will be in-person and streamed on Facebook with the recording available later.*****

Worship Reminders

December 4 Worship Service 9:30 a.m.

Lector and Communion Assistant: Tim Benson

Usher Captain: Roger Dutzle

December 11 Worship Service 9:30 a.m.

Lector and Communion Assistant: Lis Schroeder

Usher Captain: David Kidd

December 18 Worship Service 9:30 a.m.

Lector: Sharon Pufahl

Communion Assistant: Pat Dutzle

Usher Captain: Bill Potter

December 24 Christmas Eve Service 4:00p.m.

Lector and Communion Assistant: Mark Dahlke

Communion Assistants: Mark Dahlke, Dick Pirwitz, and Tammy Hansen

Usher Captain: TBD

December 24 Christmas Eve Service 8:00p.m.

Lector: Brody and Aubrey McCluskey

Communion Assistants: Ed Rogers, RJ Rogers, and Karen Fritz

Usher Captain: TBD

December 25 Christmas Service

Lector and Communion Assistant: Kathy Marose

Usher Captains: Jeri Shultis & Harold Seebecker

December Altar Guild: Becky Colwell and Sharon Pufahl



*** Giving	Cash/Check
October 2, 2022	\$3,604.50
October 9, 2022	\$ 929.25
October 16, 2022	\$1,232.00
October 23, 2022	\$2,361.00
October 30, 2022	\$4,122.00
** Online Giving Total for October 2022	\$1,933.39

*** The chart above reflects the financial counts each week from the offering and money that's been sent in and online donations to include: designated funds (Building, Memorial, flowers, etc) and special projects (Ukraine, Mercy Chips, Farm, Toys for Joy, etc).

** Online donations will be reported once a month due to posting issues. Near the end/beginning of the month the weekly amounts were not always accurate.

* The below receipts reflect money available for operating budget AFTER deducting designated giving.

Gen Fund	October 2022 Actual	October 2022	October YTD Actual	October YTD Budget
* Receipts	\$35,960.87	\$12,500.00	\$141,489.45	\$125,000.00
Disbursements	\$13,357.06	\$16,532.00	\$84,183.04	\$165,330.00

Church Office Hours

The church office is open **Monday – Thursday from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** Messages left on the church voicemail are only checked during office hours. For urgent messages and emergencies, contact Pastor Joan at 920-226-0453 or Dick Pirwitz, council president, at 608-548-5982. If not immediately available, they will answer as soon as possible.

We at Bethany Lutheran Church, Mauston, seek to build unity by instilling hope through:

ENGAGING
all generations in the practices and teaching of Jesus,

WELCOMING
each other,

REACHING OUT
to our greater community.

Has your contact information changed? Be sure to let us know!
(608) 847-6690