

# BETHANY LUTHERAN

## Newsletter

April 2023

**A Note from the Pastor:** Another pastor has written a blog post about what congregations have to offer people who may have some desire to be at church but do not feel like they are yet Jesus followers. This post asks, why Church? I found this post to be very thought provoking and inspiring. I thought I would share some of these thoughts with you. What follows are some of the things I have thought of about this topic, some of these things could perhaps even use their own newsletter articles.

#1 – People sometimes make the mistake of thinking that everyone in a faith community always need to be in full and complete agreement with each other and the pastor. Rick Warren, the pastor who wrote the purpose driven books series so popular a decade ago, talks about the ability of us as human beings to walk ‘hand-in-hand even if we do not see eye-to-eye.’ It is okay to come to our church even if you do not agree with everyone here. I know that I would be disappointed in myself as a homilist if people did not sometimes disagree or think differently about sermon material. This is largely because one of the things that I want as a pastor is for people to be able to think (deeply even) about the things of faith.

#2 – People sometimes forget that the people at most worship services consider themselves to be sinners. At some point some people must have been told that worship was where people with perfect lives that never did anything wrong gathered on a weekly basis. This is not what worship is about. I once heard an evangelist say that the opposite is in fact true. Lutheran worship is designed with the idea that none of us are perfect.

#3 – Churches are one of the few places in contemporary society where we as people interact intergenerationally. There are benefits for people of all ages when these sorts of interactions happen.

#4 – As many of you know, in addition to serving you as your pastor, I work in the field of mental health. A lot of the things we do as a congregation has a known positive correlation with improved mental health. Some of these things are: thinking of others, forgiveness, compassion, engaging in prayer, mission projects/volunteerism, fellowship/connection to others, and having an attitude of thankfulness. Spiritual aspects are now routinely looked at by therapists thinking to help individual people experience better overall mental health.

#5 – Being a part of a local congregation allows people, who are newer to a community, another place to connect to the people and culture of their new place.

#6 – There is a known positive correlation between regular attendance at worship and better overall physical health. Many studies have shown that people who weekly attend an activity in a worshipping community experience overall better physical health, live longer, and have lower blood pressure.

#7 -- I remember going with a friend to visit her great aunt in California. This aunt was clear that she was agnostic but went to a church regularly because she enjoyed the interaction with people and liked being involved with some of the mission work. My hope for our congregation is that she would be welcome. If she would be, why wouldn't we welcome others?

There are probably plenty of other things that should be on this list that I have yet to think of. What is missing here, what do you think, why Church? God Bless, Pastor Joan

## Our Church Culture

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What is church culture? Church culture is how Bethany feels to you. It's the atmosphere, the vibe or the climate of our church. A healthy church culture is extremely important.

If the culture is healthy, amazing things happen:

- People love being here.
- People grow.
- Our church becomes attractive to the community and more fully accomplishes its mission.

What hurts our church's culture? Without a specific person at Bethany in mind, it's certain types of people:

- It's always about them.
- They criticize, but don't contribute.
- They want to be served, rather than serve.

How do we maintain a healthy church culture? Support the people who create and maintain a healthy church culture. Those people:

- Serve selflessly.
- Feel it is not about them.
- Are generous.
- Are considerate of other people.
- Rally around our mission and strategy so we can accomplish what God is asking us to do.
- Identify and eliminate the toxins - Conflict, selfishness, and personal agendas.

When I walk through the doors at Bethany, I feel hope, joy and love. When you walk in, what do you feel? ~ Dick

## Hospitality Committee Easter Brunch



There will be an Easter Brunch following Easter Sunday worship hosted by the Hospitality Committee and volunteers. The menu will include: egg bake, muffins, fruit, milk, juice, coffee and tea. Everyone is invited to attend. Sign up appreciated, but not necessary on kiosk in the Narthex. A free will offering will be taken to offset expenses. Volunteers would also be appreciated for Saturday set up and Sunday serving and clean up. If you are willing to help, contact Ruth Marose at 608-847-4381 or the church office.

## Lounge and Youth Room Update

The response in support for the Lounge and Youth Room project surpassed everyone's expectations. We originally hoped to raise \$1,000 in donations in order to ease the amount of money needed from the project's budget as appropriated by the Budget and Finance Committee.

As we come to the close of the project, Bethany members have contributed \$3,928, which means there is only about \$200 left to come from church sources such as the Building Fund or Memorial Fund.

The Update Committee extends their deepest appreciation and "thanks" to everyone who either directly purchased items, donated money, or helped in any other way to remodel our rooms. Thanks to so many members, Bethany now has more comfortable, people-friendly gathering places for meetings, Bible study groups, and easy conversation spaces to enjoy.

It is our hope that Bethany will continue to support other projects that will continue to need support from its members. If this experience is any indication of future needs for our church, Bethany is in a great position. Enjoy the "before and after" pictures on back of the calendar to see the progress made. God's Blessings, Sheri Benson and Elley Dahlke; Co-chairs, Rooms Update Committee



### Sunday School News

April will be a busy month for our Sunday school students. On April 2nd (Palm Sunday), not only will they sing during worship, but they will also participate in a fun Easter egg hunt during Sunday school time. Our last day of Sunday school will be April 30th – FAMILY DAY!! Families are encouraged to attend that day – songs, activities, and snacks are on the agenda. After worship that day, Sunday school kids will be serving at fellowship to raise funds to update the nursery. Stay tuned for more details on that.

### Finance and Property Meeting

The F & P Committee met on March 2, 2023. Gary Gray, Ed Rogers, Dave Kidd, Mike Borreson, and Jon Williams were present. The Committee approved mission support of \$500 to the LaCrosse Synod/ELCA, \$85 to Lutheran Social Services and \$85 to the Mauston Food Pantry.

Gary read a thank you letter from Lutheran Social Services for Bethany's support during the last year.

The committee reviewed the costs for snow removal for the season so far and felt that it has gone very well. We have been charged for 5 plowings and 9 applications of salt so far this winter.

Elley reported via email that her "Dream list" for the lounge and youth room donations has gone very well. Elley and the committee are looking forward to continued support and donations from the congregation and members to complete the wish list. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the project.

The next F & P Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 11 at 5:30 pm.

### March 2023 Council Highlights

There is a new contract for the copier in the office that allows us more color copies per month and more than enough black and white copies. That will save us \$600 a year.

Alliant did an audit of our parking lot lights and discovered that the City of Mauston was paying for them. We will have to pay for the lights from now on. The bill will be about \$50 a month (\$600 a year).

The congregation has donated nearly \$2,700 for the Lounge and Youth Room remodeling in cash or items. All that remains are two loveseats and chairs for \$1,100.

Pastor Joan discussed having a Business After Worship event that would allow businesses and individuals to set-up a display in the Fellowship Hall and members could visit with them after worship.

The Mission Committee was able to send \$120 from selling knit dish cloths/hot pads to the Mauston School District for children without any money in their lunch account.

The Worship Committee is looking into identifying some older relics that the church has collected over the years and deciding what to do with them.

**Daily Prayers - March 4, 2023 (written by a confirmation student)**

Morning Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me remember what a difference it makes when I make time with You a priority in my morning. Awaken me in body and spirit each day with a desire to meet with You and to hear You speak words of affirmation, assurance, and wisdom over my heart as I prepare to go into my day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Daytime Prayer:

Lord, I ask You to give me the strength and wisdom that I will need to keep this day going.

Nighttime Prayer:

Thank You for our home and a place to sleep and good food to eat. Help us rest well, give us peaceful dreams, and send your angels around our home to protect us throughout the night. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Dianne Peterson	April 1	Bergen Brandt	April 18
Kirstin Grzenia	April 1	Nancy Blixt	April 18
Susan Engevold	April 1	Chase Seebecker	April 20
Kathleen Marose	April 4	Douglas Lindner	April 23
Johnie Steinke	April 5	Dawson Dearth	April 24
Emily Wiese	April 7	Dorrine Berg	April 24
LeRoy Weber	April 7	Kim Reigard	April 27
Daniel Remington	April 9	Brady Nelson	April 28
Marcus Hansen	April 10	Laura Wilberg	April 29
AudreyGierhart	April 10	Lauren McIntire	April 30
Jacob Muchenberger	April 10	Patricia Lutz	April 30
Michael Borreson	April 11	Alex Tomany	April 30
Trey Honnold	April 11		
Ella Rotzoll	April 11		
Calista Coller	April 12		
Carissa Huebner	April 12		
Emalee Bohnert	April 14		
Remi Hagen-Buda	April 14		
Kari Lalk	April 15		
Brad Ellerman	April 15		
Norma Smith	April 15		
Elliott Wilberg	April 15		

**There are no April Anniversaries**

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

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The family of Shari Crawford, the family of Rev. Dick Bonney, Larry Mason, the Lewerenz family, Hannah Tourdot, Steven Potter, William (Bill) Potter, David Dellamuth, Duane Weisenhaus, Elwood Syverson, John Benson, Lois Olson, Ron Engevold, Raina Nava, Angela Bollig, Randy Mullenberg, Ken Plants, Donna Christensen, Dennis Stark, Bill Voltz, the Dillin family, and those who suffer with war and disaster.

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

### **April 2 Palm Sunday Worship Service 9:30 a.m.**

Lector: and Communion Assistant: Kathy Noe  
Gospel Readers: Mark Dahlke and Karen Fritz  
Usher Captain: Roger Dutzle

### **April 6 Maundy Thursday Worship Service 7:00 p.m.**

Lector: Barbara Handrich  
Communion Assistant: Disciples  
Usher Captain: TBD

### **April 9 Easter Worship Service 9:30 a.m.**

Lector: Ed Rogers  
Communion Assistant: Ed and RJ Rogers  
Usher Captain: David Kidd

### **April 16 Worship Service 9:30 a.m.**

Lector and Communion Assistant: Lis Schroeder  
Usher Captain: Bill Potter

### **April 23 Worship Service 9:30 a.m.**

Lector: Sharon Pufahl  
Communion Assistant: Cindy Preuss  
Usher Captain: Jeri Shultis and Harold Seebecker

### **April 30 Worship Service 9:30 a.m.**

Lector and Communion Assistant: Kathleen Marose  
Usher Captain: Jeri Shultis and Harold Seebecker

**April Altar Guild:** Ruth and Kathleen Marose



## Holy Week Worship

### **Palm Sunday - April 2nd, 9:30a.m.**

Join us as we wave our palm branches shouting "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." The Sunday School students will be singing.

### **Maundy Thursday - April 6th, 7:00p.m.**

We will have a reenactment of the Last Supper. It's been many years since this has been presented and we are excited to present this to the congregation.

### **Easter Sunday - April 9th, 9:30a.m.**

Celebrate the promise of our new life in Christ!  
He is risen, he is risen indeed!



*** Giving	Cash/Check
February 5, 2023	\$8,791.00
February 12, 2023	\$2,325.00
February 19, 2023	\$2,228.00
February 26, 2023	\$11,689.47
<b>** Online Giving Total for February 2023</b>	<b>\$2,334.30</b>

\*\*\* 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 Ships, 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	February 2023 Actual	February 2023 Budget	February YTD Actual	February YTD Budget
* Receipts	\$26,546.77	\$13,083.00	\$36,267.53	\$26,166.00
Disbursements	\$14,749.13	\$15,899.00	\$29,500.88	\$31,793.00

### 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**