

# BETHANY LUTHERAN

## Newsletter November

### A NOTE FROM PASTOR:

At some point in the last decade or so I went from a regular consumer of news, 'a news junkie,' to someone who tries to intake a minimum of news, especially world news. I think, for me, this is because all of the news I had been taking in regularly seemed to be 'bad' or otherwise upsetting. There has been a lot happening in the world, in the community, in the lives of our friends and family, sometimes even in our own lives that feels horrible to hear about.

It is understandable that people wonder if we are living in the end times. What do we even say to others when the worst has happened? Why does God allow the things that are happening in the world, community, and to the people we love happen? I have many thoughts on these things and would be happy to sit down, perhaps with some coffee, and chat a bit with you if you find yourself in this space. I do not have any simple answers.

It is a harder task to look around and see God's love at work for us in hard times. Surely love for others is in the willingness of people to respond quickly to disasters. The work of police, paramedics, and firefighters comes specifically to mind. Recently, a member of our congregation experienced a stay at the hospital. When I visited that person, I found that some of you had also been to visit. This caused me to look for other ways that we at Bethany are making a difference. The things that I saw when I started looking for them were amazing.

A few of these things are intentional ministries. Bethany has a formal lay visitation program that has existed for almost as long as our congregation. We call these folks 'beacons.' They are people who intentionally take interest in making sure people who can't get out and about so well anymore get contact from caring members of our congregation. Bethany also has sharing suppers, WELCA circles, a foundation, a memorial fund, people making school kits, etc.

Most of the expressions of God's love that I personally witness within our community are unplanned and informal. God comes to us through one another in powerful, meaningful ways. I do not deny that awful, cruel, and unjust things are happening in the world. However, I think it is a challenge to use, to see, experience, and do our best to be the cause of awesome, loving, beautiful things. God Bless, Pastor Joan

### **The Pray Ground is Here!**

After months of discussing and planning for the Pray Ground at Bethany, it is finally here! We are excited for this new space that will welcome our young members (see last page of newsletter for picture). The activities in the Pray Ground were selected to provide quiet play and seating for the children in an area where they are able to watch, learn and participate in the service. Parents should escort their child to the area at the front of the church and sit nearby. Bethany is living out Jesus' command, "Let the little children come to me."

If you would like to purchase an activity chosen for the Pray Ground, you can check out our Amazon Wish List. You can access the Wish List from Bethany's Facebook page.

## From Your Congregation President

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It was fascinating every time I came to Bethany to watch Westside School being turned into a pile of rubble. Cars would park, sit, and watch the demolition. The school obviously meant so much to the teachers and students of Westside. Change is stressful, but the new apartments are needed.

The Church is called to be constantly reforming, and the first step of re-forming is un-forming, breaking down what has been before, and trying new ways of putting it all back together. It is what Richard Rohr calls the universal pattern—the order, disorder, and reorder that we see in the changing of the seasons, the life and crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Deconstruction is the most painful. We would do anything to avoid it, to skip ahead to the exciting phase of rebuilding. But unless we deal with the fatal cracks in the building and clear away the rubble, nothing truly new will ever be built.

The church is always reforming, in every generation and in every season. This can be exhausting when it feels like everything is falling apart. But what if it's a necessary, ongoing part of messily overlapping cycles of change? The Church is bigger than the building, bigger than the congregation or the ELCA. The Spirit moves in mysterious ways, and part of coming together into a new thing is the undoing of old things.

The church is always dying, always rising, because we are—as individuals and as a body—made in the image of a crucified God.

The old is always passing; the new is always coming into being. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Yes, God is doing a new thing among us! God is in the pile of rubble - God is in the new foundation - And God is in the vision of a future that is only beginning to come into focus.

Adapted from “A New Ministry out of the Rubble” by Darla DeFrance

## Worship Committee

The Worship committee met on October 11th and our focus was Advent and the Christmas services. Advent will begin on December 3rd, so we hope to have the Christmas trees decorated by that date. We will have Christmas decorating on November 30th with a pizza lunch!

The Sunday School program is scheduled for December 17th. Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday so there will be a 9:30 a.m. service as well as services at 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. A Christmas Day service will be at 9:30 a.m. with special carols and communion and a meal to follow, watch for future details on that.

## Sunday School News



Thank you to everyone who has helped kick off our Sunday school year so far – we've had great students and help all the way around! We have met our buddy Cosmos – he shines brightly in the night sky and reminds us to shine Jesus' light. We've also made the star/galaxy paintings on display in the back of the church, as well as a Starry Night Light – it will remind us that Jesus is with us even when it is dark.

## **October Finance and Property Meeting**

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- The Committee approved mission support of \$500 to the LaCrosse Synod/ELCA, \$85 to Lutheran Social Services and \$85 to the Mauston Food Pantry.
- The asbestos remediation should begin in a few weeks. We will be given a week or two notice prior to the beginning of the project to move stuff out of the old section of the basement to the newer section.
- High rise toilets have been installed in the bathrooms next to the fellowship hall.
- The items raised from our recent fire inspection have been taken care of, including the recharging of the fire extinguishers and fixing the exit door in the stairway to the basement.
- A new walk-in door has been installed to the storage shed.
- A new "Welcome" sign has been cut out and will replace the current entrance sign to the parking lot once it is painted and ready for installation.
- The committee is continuing to look at options to improve our sound system.
- The next meeting will be November 7th at 5:30 p.m. We will review the proposed budget for 2024, all committees should have their proposed needs in to the office prior to that meeting.

## **October 2023 Council Highlights**

- Properties and Maintenance are adding another check signer to ensure two are always available.
- A new doorknob with a lock was installed on the lounge exit door.
- Pastor Joan will be on vacation the week after Christmas.
- Pastor Joan's two-year contract will be up for renewal next September. She is interested in staying on, so we will contact the Bishop.
- The Annual Meeting is January 21st, 2024.
- There will be a 9:30 a.m. service, a 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve and a 9:30 a.m. service on Christmas Day.
- Over 70 people are going to the Christmas in the Dells event.
- Faith Development is planning a game day for Christmas Day after the service, for members who are not spending the day with family.
- The next Drive Thru Meal is November 12th, serving chili.

## **Attention Parents of College Students**

The Faith Development Committee is working on maintaining contacts with our college students through notes and care packages. If you have a child who is in college and we have not already gotten their address, please call the church office at 608-847-6690, or send an e-mail to [bethanymaustonelca@gmail.com](mailto:bethanymaustonelca@gmail.com) so that we can add them to our list.

## **Christmas In The Dells**

We are excited about our upcoming trip to Christmas in the Dells on Sunday, November 5th, for the 2:00 p.m. show (1:00 p.m. dinner). For those attending, transportation will be on your own and you should have already received your tickets. If you have any questions, call Sheri at 608-562-5112.

## **November Community Dinner**

Our next free community dinner will be Sunday, November 12th, from 4:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m. These suppers are a joint effort between the Stewardship Committee and the Hospitality Committee. They are part of our continued effort to reach out to our members and the community sharing the love Christ has shown us. Stop on by for a chili meal and spread the word to your friends, neighbors, and family. Members who are unable to pick up a meal may contact the church office at 608-847-6690 for delivery. If you would like to be part of this ministry, volunteers and financial gifts are always needed. Contact Kathy Marose or Sheri Benson for more information.

## Happy November birthday to....

Cathy Kidd	11/01
Trent Grzenia	11/02
Robert Dallman	11/05
Mark Behling	11/05
Chad Schultz	11/05
Mitchell Gray	11/06
Finn Winter	11/06
Jim Dillin	11/08
Bryce Hollis	11/08
Celeste Coller	11/08
Jim Miller	11/10
Abby Williams	11/10
Kari Field	11/11
Brielle Bohnert	11/12
Linda Dallman	11/12
Wallene Feldman	11/14
John Benson	11/18
Shaylee Hoffman	11/18
Gary Grefe	11/19
George Pierce	11/19
Jaden Steinke	11/20
Nicole Potter	11/20
Jacquie Puent	11/21
Brantley Holzberger	11/26
Janet Potter	11/26
Quentin Seebecker	11/28
Michael Schultz	11/30

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

## Happy November anniversary to...

Robert & Linda Dallman	11/01
Dan & Tammy Remington	11/05
Donald & Marge Hoffmann	11/09
Michael & Lorrie Schultz	11/11

**\*\*\*Unless otherwise noted, all worship services will be in-person at 9:30 a.m. and streamed on Facebook with the recording available later.\*\*\***

### Worship Reminders

#### November 5 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Darryl Teske  
Usher Captain: Roger Dutzle

#### November 12 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Marjo Staehling  
Usher Captain: David Kidd

#### November 19 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Danielle Knutson  
Usher Captain: Bill Potter

#### November 26 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Karen Fritz  
Usher Captains: Jeri Shultis and Harold Seebecker

**November Altar Guild: Faith Circle**

## In Our Prayers

~~~ Ken Plants, Elwood Syverson, RJ Rogers, Louie Voltz, 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.



| *** Giving                                | Cash/Check |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| September 3, 2023                         | \$3,656.00 |
| September 10, 2023                        | \$1,876.00 |
| September 17, 2023                        | \$1,836.00 |
| September 24, 2023                        | \$4,729.00 |
|                                           |            |
| ** Online Giving Total for September 2023 | \$2,102.24 |

\*\*\* 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      | September 2023 Actual | September 2023 Budget | September YTD Actual | September YTD Budget |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| * Receipts    | \$13,567.68           | \$13,083.00           | \$123,728.76         | \$117,747.00         |
| Disbursements | \$11,977.22           | \$14,967.00           | \$119,410.05         | \$138,149.00         |

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.

**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 608-548-35661. If not immediately available, they will answer as soon as possible.

**Has your contact information changed? Be sure to let us know!**  
**(608) 847-6690**  
**bethanymaustonelca@gmail.com**