

BETHANY LUTHERAN

Newsletter April 2024

A NOTE FROM PASTOR:

From a weather standpoint, Spring is my favorite time of the year. There is a unique and special joy in seeing those first crocus blooms popping out of the ground. This is a signal that soon other new growth and warmth will return after waiting through the winter.

Easter too comes after a time of waiting. Although Easter celebrations have become secularized within our culture, if we pay close attention, we can see signs of our faith popping out at us like those crocus blooms.

One tradition for Easter surrounds eggs. Eggs in art are a sign of new life and new beginnings. It was a tradition among medieval Christians to slow down or even abstain from the eating of eggs at the end of winter until Eastertide. This might have been in part because it was more difficult to get eggs during wintertime. Most people who grew up in agricultural areas can attest that the same hens that seem to not lay enough eggs in winter can make so many eggs they are difficult to give away in warmer weather. Eggs available in the winter would have undoubtedly been hardboiled in order to help them last longer. Thus, we decorate hardboiled eggs as reminders that Christ's work completed on the cross leads us to future abundant life.

Another tradition for Easter is eating a chocolate bunny. I will never forget those bunnies in my childhood basket. It is a fairly common practice to not eat chocolate during Lent; thus, chocolate in an Easter basket is easy to explain. Rabbits or bunnies are not directly present in the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Rabbits do show up symbolically in art associated with Mary, the mother of Jesus. Definitely rabbits become more active in the spring. No one is really certain how bunnies and eggs became connected. Legends about Ostara and a bunny that lays eggs do not show up in writing until the late 1800's. In the winter, rabbits and hares eat a different diet and lose weight. It is my understanding that a winter rabbit was less tasty as meat than one during other seasons. Perhaps the appearance of more bunnies during the Easter season and a natural abstaining from eating them during wintertime link chocolate and rabbit as things our ancestors look forward to having during the Easter season.

In any case, hunts, colorful hard boiled eggs, and baskets with chocolate bunnies are reminders that spring, the season of new life, is here once more. Happy Easter, Pastor Joan Wittrock

FROM THE PRESIDENT

IS THIS WHAT DEFINES WHO WE ARE?

I find myself spending way too much time lately working on the Bethany constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions. We periodically read them and update them and then file them away on a computer or a 3-ring binder. Although this has to be done, do these documents define who we are?

Documents don't talk to us about loneliness or hurt or loss or confusion or fear. They don't put their arms around us and give us a hug, or a smile, or a compliment, or a shoulder to cry on, or reassurance. They don't claim us as their own and tell us how we were loved from the moment we were born. God does. The family of God does. - Dick

FUNDRAISING BEGINS!

The Properties and Finance Committee has been working on several big projects since last fall. The asbestos floor tiles have been removed from the basement and a new audio system has been installed in the sanctuary. These projects help keep our church home welcoming and safe for all. The total cost of these two projects is \$52,000. The Bethany Memorial Foundation has generously agreed to provide matching funds for this project. For every dollar that you give, the Foundation will match that! We are asking for you to prayerfully consider how you can financially support this project. There is a display on the tripod in the narthex with envelopes with various dollar amounts on them. When these envelopes are gone we will have commitments for \$26,000. When these commitments are fulfilled and the matching amount received, we will have our project fully funded. You may choose to give this money as a lump sum or make payments over time. As always, we work best when we work together.

College Care Packages

2

The Faith Development Committee is gearing up for its semi-annual care package drive for Bethany's college students. The purpose of these care packages are to help remind the students that their home church is thinking about them, that they are in our thoughts, and to have some extra "comfort" food to help ease the stress during final exams.

The Committee arranges for the arrival of the packages prior to winter final exams and the end of the spring semester. Therefore, we are looking for donations of snack items to include in the packages.

On Monday, April 29th at 11:00 a.m., we will have a "Boxing Day" to wrap up, address, and mail the boxes. All are welcome to join us for this event. Additionally, if you have a college-aged student who we do not have an address for, please call or email the church office.

This project is made possible by a Thrivent Action Team grant.

Bethany Movie Day Success

Bethany's Movie Day was a huge success. We had 62 people attend the movie which included 37 Bethany members and folks from Mauston, Elroy, Hillsboro, Camp Douglas, Wilton, and Tomah. Thanks to our sponsor Thrivent Financial we were able to do this outreach opportunity for the community. Stay tuned for more events planned by our Faith Development Committee coming soon.

Community Meal Update

On March 10th, we had our quarterly free drive thru supper. We want to thank our sponsors for this month: Thrivent Financial, Wisconsin River Meats, Arby's, Festival Foods, and Bethany Lutheran. We love putting this on for our community and support from area businesses and Bethany members makes it happen. The day started out fast and furious as we prepared 48 meals for our delivery drivers to take out. We were able to provide this service for our members along with friends at Terrace Heights and the Juneau County Sheriff's department. Between 4:00 and 5:06 p.m. we served 166 meals! At that point we had to close down because we were out of food. We could not have done this without a group of 15 dedicated Bethany volunteers. This is an exciting outreach opportunity for us that continues to grow. Our next Free Dinner will be May 19th from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Lunch and Learn

Our next Lunch and Learn with Pastor Joan will be on Monday April 15th from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and join in our discussion about taxes. What an appropriate topic for April 15th!

The La Crosse Area Synod Hunger Team invites all congregations to support our upcoming water project "**Water is Life**". This project will focus on water and how it impacts us both physically and spiritually. Our goals are to...

*Bring an awareness of the importance of water on the world's food supply and global efforts to end hunger.

*Show how ELCA World Hunger is working to encourage, support, and sustain safe water supplies.

*Raise money to support ELCA's water projects including simple wells, irrigation systems, latrines, and water filters.

The Bethany Mission Committee has accepted the challenge on behalf of Bethany to participate in this project. We have set our fundraising goal at \$10.00 per baptized member which is currently 452 = \$4520. Over the next 2 months you will hear stories, be invited to participate in activities, pray for those who do not have access to clean water and be encouraged to contribute toward our goal. When we accomplish this goal, we will



be able to fund 1 ½ clean water wells which will provide water to people who do not currently have access to clean water. "**Water is Life**" but for us, it is easy to take water for granted. Let's work together to understand the importance of water in our lives and how we can make an impact on the lives of those who don't have this luxury.

Water is life.

We have 2 openings for members to go to Synod Assembly June 7-8 at the Three Bears Lodge in Warrens. We will be car pooling there and coming back each day. If interested, talk to Dick Pirwitz.

Pastor received a letter of Greetings from Lila Opprecht. Kathy will bring an Easter card to the April Council meeting for signing and mailing to Lila.

An invoice was received from Gray Electric in the amount of \$811.95, for work completed earlier this year. The total balance was a donation from Jeff and Melanie Gray. Dick will send a note of thanks to them for this donation.

Dick provided each Council member a copy of the Church Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions. The assignment is to review the Continuing Resolutions and update their committee's section by their next committee meeting. We plan to vote on the revisions at the May Council meeting. Once approved, these changes must be approved by the congregation at the next congregation meeting.

Pastor Joan is working with the Bishop toward resolution regarding Michael Pechman's membership and Synod Authorized Minister application.

The Mauston Ministerial Association has scheduled Bethany to host the Thanksgiving Eve service and distribution of Christmas gift baskets.

Faith Development Committee: The Valentine's Party and Movie Day, were well attended. The Purim dinner on March 24th is filled. There will be a Sunday School Easter Egg hunt on Palm Sunday. Sunday School ends April 28th. Next mailing to college students will be April 29th – congregation donations encouraged and appreciated. Confirmation is on May 5th.

Stewardship Team: The Community Supper served 166 people in 65 minutes and ran out. 109 of those were non-members! 48 meals delivered. All of this accomplished by 14 volunteers.

Worship Committee: Diane Huebner created a full user guide for the new sound system, as well as simple directions posted upstairs. Theresa Ellerman has been making sure children's tablets are charged and available for the kids each service. Going forward, this will be managed by the Church Secretary (Julie or Marie). Maundy Thursday reenactment preparation is underway. Liturgy settings will switch to Setting 8 on April 14th.

Mission Committee: The Lutheran World Relief kits project is underway. The Synod congregational water project will begin in April, running through the first week in June. Reuseable grocery bags are being printed, with shipment expected soon.

Properties Committee: Jim M. reported the upcoming purchase of a sprayer and paint for maintaining our parking lots lines. Mike Borreson and Randy Fabian will do the painting. The asbestos project and sound system installation are now complete. Considering quotes to replace heaters in the new bathrooms. Spring cleanup planning is underway!

March 2024 Finance and Property Meeting

The F&P Committee met on March 12th. Gary Gray (chair), Mike Borreson, Maynard Miller, Jimmy Miller, and Randy Fabian were present. Jon Williams was absent. Also attending the meeting were Tim Benson and Dick Pirwitz. A motion was made by Randy Fabian, seconded by Maynard Miller, to approve mission support of \$500 to the LaCrosse Synod/ELCA, \$85 to Lutheran Social Services, and \$85 to the Mauston Food Pantry. Donations on Food Pantry Sundays will be over and above our budgeted amount.

The asbestos project and sound system installation is complete. The fund-raising plans to replace borrowed funds will be presented to the congregation in the near future.

The mowing contract with A-Plus Landscaping Service was approved for 2024 for the mowing of the church lawn and Plymouth Cemetery.

The blower/heater in the entryway runs continuously. Mike will check with BTU regarding this to determine what action to take.

The next meeting will take place on April 9th.

701 Grove Street Mauston, Wisconsin * 608-847-6690 * www.bethanymauston.com

Happy April birthday to....

Sue Engevold	04/01
Kirstin Grzenia	04/01
Dianne Peterson	04/01
Kathleen Marose	04/04
Johnie Steinke	04/05
Emily Wiese	04/07
LeRoy Weber	04/07
Mary Kay Tardiff	04/08
William Marose	04/09
Dan Remington	04/09
Audrey Gierhart	04/10
Marcus Hansen	04/10
Jacob Muchenberger	04/10
Mike Borreson	04/11
Trey Honnold	04/11
Ella Rotzoll	04/11
Carissa Huebner	04/12
Calista Coller	04/12
Remi Hagen-Buda	04/14
Emalee Bohnert	04/14
Norma Smith	04/15
Kari Lalk	04/15
Brad Ellerman	04/15
Elliott Wilberg	04/15
Nancy Blixt	04/18
Bergen Brandt	04/18
Chase Seebecker	04/20
Douglas Lindner	04/23
Dorrine Berg	04/24
Dawson Dearth	04/24
Kim Reigard	04/27
Brady Nelson	04/28
Laura Wilberg	04/29
Patricia Lutz	04/30
Lauren McIntire	04/30
Alex Tomany	04/30

Happy April anniversary to...

Jeri & Molly Shultis	04/18
Loana Rojas-Corrales & Darryl Teske	04/21
Brad & Teresa Ellerman	04/23
Steve & Kendra Grzenia	04/23



Remember Food Pantry Sunday is the first Sunday of every month. Bring a non-perishable food item that can be collected during offering or make a monetary donation using a provided envelope available on the ushers stand.

Pastor Glenn Borreson, a former Bethany pastor, will celebrate his 80th birthday on Monday, April 29th. We have been invited by his family to help him celebrate by showing him with lots of birthday greetings. Please send a greeting of your choice by mail, email, call or text. His contact information is:

Glenn Borreson
 1200 Harvest Circle
 Holmen, WI 54636
 Cell phone/Text: 608-317-8811
 Email: borresong@yahoo.com

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

~~~ Jean and Mike Ellerman, Michael Voltz, the family and friends of Maureen Hickey, the family and friends of Callie Quinnell, Tammy Brown, Patti Thomas, Mary Jean Cauley, Donna Voltz, Bridget Wells, Duane Weisenhaus, Ken Plants, Elwood Syverson, RJ Rogers, 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 at 9:30 a.m. and streamed on Facebook with the recording available later.\*\*\***

### **April 7 Worship Service**

Lector & Communion Assistant: Danielle Knutson  
Usher Captain: Roger Dutzle

### **April 14 Worship Service**

Lector & Communion Assistant: Rosemary Dellamuth  
Usher Captain: David Kidd

### **April 21 Worship Service**

Lector: Kathy Noe  
Communion Assistant: Danielle Knutson  
Usher Captain: Bill Potter

### **April 28 Worship Service**

Lector & Communion Assistant: Kathy Marose  
Usher Captains: Jeri Shultis and Harold Seebecker

**April Altar Guild:** Jeri and Molly Shultis



| *** Giving                               | Cash/Check |
|------------------------------------------|------------|
| February 4, 2024                         | \$3,660.00 |
| February 11, 2024                        | \$2,477.00 |
| February 18, 2024                        | \$1,853.00 |
| February 25, 2024                        | \$1,551.00 |
|                                          |            |
| ** Online Giving Total for February 2024 | \$2,720.28 |

\*\*\* 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.

\*\* 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 2024 Actual | February 2024 Budget | February YTD Actual | February YTD Budget |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| * Receipts    | \$12,375.38          | \$12,500.00          | \$24,334.16         | \$25,000.00         |
| Disbursements | \$14,958.93          | \$16,865.00          | \$29,485.30         | \$33,728.00         |

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 608-548-3561. 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**