

# BETHANY LUTHERAN

## Newsletter

### May 2024

#### **A NOTE FROM PASTOR:**

To the people of God at Bethany Lutheran Church,

Once again May is here. May brings a lot of activities and special events to Bethany. I would like to take the time to point some of these things out for you. Three out of four Sundays this month will have special celebrations.

On May 5th we will again celebrate with several of our congregation's young people who will be 'affirming' their Baptism (getting confirmed). If all goes according to plan, five people will affirm their baptisms this year. You are all invited to come and hear their faith statements in our special worship service for them.

On May 12th we will be honoring mothers during our worship. We will offer a special blessing for mothers at this service. This extends to any and all mothers: mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, foster mothers, and mothers of people's hearts.

On May 26th we will have a bacculaureate (a special blessing for graduates). All people graduating soon or have recently graduated are welcome to come this Sunday and receive a blessing from our congregation. Students are welcome to wear caps, gowns, and other graduation related regalia to this service if they so desire.

There are also lots of activities and opportunities to volunteer your time coming up. I invite you to take a look at the calendar attached to this monthly newsletter and see what other things are happening that you might be interested in. God Bless, Pastor Joan Wittrock

#### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

##### **THERE IS A FRESHNESS, A SPARKLE**

Looking around Bethany there is a "freshness," a "sparkle." A TV has replaced the old black announcement board that was universally ignored. The lounge and old youth room have been redecorated and are popular places to congregate again. Areas of the building interior have been painted. The nursery area at the far end of the Fellowship Hall has been reborn as The Kid Connection, fitting the needs of the children now coming to church. There is a children's area at the front of the sanctuary that allows children to be part of our worship. The altar area has new LED spotlights. Finally, we have a new sound system that enhances our music and speech. It's not just what we see or hear that is fresh and sparkly. It is an enhanced attitude of service to our members and the community. We are taking seriously our commitment to living in Grace and Love. More people are volunteering. More people are attending worship and our giving is up. We have become an even brighter light in the darkness. Do me a favor. Next time you come to Bethany, look at the fundraising board in the narthex and take one of the envelopes. Whether it is for \$1,000 or \$5, you become a part of the Bethany that is growing and glowing. - Dick

#### **CONFIRMATION**

Bethany will celebrate the confirmation of Talia Hansen, McKenna Brockman, Sophia Brummund, Aubrey Ellerman, and Nolan Wilberg on May 5th. Please join us in wishing them God's blessings and a life full of faith on this special day by sharing in fellowship and cake following the service.

## **Celebrating Our Graduates**

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On Sunday, May 26th, we will honor Bethany's graduates at the 9:30 a.m. service. All of Bethany's graduates are invited and encouraged to attend. This year's graduates are Rosella Barton, Calista Collier, Skylar Daniels, Ahren Heinrich, Helen Hernandez, Aubrey McCluskey, Kayla Pederson, and Sarah Schiller. Following the service, we will continue to celebrate with cake and coffee at the Fellowship Hour. Please join us in wishing them well as they start a new chapter in their lives. If you know of a graduate that we inadvertently missed, please notify the office.

## **Kids Connection**

The Faith Development Committee continues their work on growing and nurturing faith in our youth by providing a space for them to gather. The area at the back of the Fellowship Hall is now known as The Kid Connection (formerly the Nursery). This name was chosen to focus on the need for people of all ages to develop connections. Connections to God and connections to each other. The air hockey table and foosball table have been moved to this area along with games and activities that focus on the ages of the children we have at Bethany at this time. Bethany is committed to helping kids create lifelong relationships with each other and with Jesus and to follow his commandments "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and "you shall love your neighbors as yourself".

## **May Community Dinner**

Our next free community dinner will be on Sunday, May 19th, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. These dinners 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. 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 a 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 or if you would like to volunteer.

## **"Water is Life"**

The Bethany Mission Committee will continue to bring Bethany important information about the importance of water in our world. Throughout the upcoming months, we will work together as a congregation to understand the many ways "Water is Life". Beginning May 12th, we begin sharing water information in many forms. There will be a water video, an ongoing water question of the week in which members can participate with an opportunity to win prizes, and fundraising to provide wells to people in places that do not have access to clean drinking water. The project will culminate in July with Vacation Bible School and Worship in the Park, which will be centered on how "Water is Life". Watch for more information to come.

## **"Caring for God's Creation"**

There are many ways in which we can care for God's creation. How?? There are numerous ways to do this. The Bethany Mission Committee invites you to help with one way by using reusable grocery tote bags. These tote bags will be available to members beginning in mid-May and are free for the asking, however a donation would be appreciated. The donated funds will be given to the "Water is Life" project. We would also like to hear from congregational members on how they help "Care for God's Creation". A display will be available in which you can add your method of taking care of the beautiful world God has given us.

## **LWR Kits**

Many Thanks for your donations to Lutheran World Relief for Baby Care kits and Personal Health kits. I have been able to assemble 8 Baby Care kits and 14 Personal Health kits. They will go out in August.  
– Mary Pirwitz, Mission Committee Member

## **Celebrate Pastor Joan**

Pastor Joan's birthday is May 7th. Send her a text, email or card to wish her a great day!!

- We received a report from the FDIC with regards to our accounts with Bank of Mauston. FDIC insures up to \$250K. Any account funds above that are not insured. We are looking into alternative options for this.
- We have received \$11,405 in fundraising contributions for the Asbestos and Sound System projects.
- Special Congregational Meeting – April 28th. Standard rules will apply. This meeting is expected to be very brief, as it is a formality required of the Synod.
- Pastor Joan asked if it would be possible to allow a discretionary fund for use as deemed necessary by the Office Administrators. Gary said this could come from Unbudgeted for this year and budget the funds next year. We will provide \$30/month.
- Spring Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, May 18th, beginning around 9:00 a.m. We're asking for volunteers to stop in to help as they are able. There are many jobs – flower beds, weed trimming, window washing, painting, polishing, etc.
- The Properties Committee is looking for a few individuals that would like to help with developing a plan for the courtyard make-over.
- Faith Development Committee has a Thrivent grant for the college care packages. Donations can be placed in the box in the narthex any time prior to their mailing on April 29th .
- The former nursery area at the end of fellowship hall has been redecorated and is now known as “Kid Connection”.
- The last day of Sunday School is April 28th .
- Any members doing Lector readings are welcome to stop by the church during office hours or after services if they'd like to test the new sound system prior to their next scheduled reading.
- Confirmation – 1st Sunday in May. Pentecost – May 19th. Graduation – last Sunday in May.
- Kathy Marose presented the Mission Committee's interest in the Synod Emphasis of “Water is Life”. She shared several ways Bethany could play a part in the Water Project.
- July 8th-11th, VBS will have a focus on water, and may conclude with the Sunday, July 14th service being held outdoors at the Riverside Park. The band pavilion has been reserved for this.

### **April 2024 Finance and Property Meeting**

The F & P Committee met on April 9, 2024. The Committee approved mission support of \$500 to the La Crosse Synod/ELCA, \$85 to Lutheran Social Services and \$85 to the Mauston Food Pantry. An additional \$105 was collected for the Food Pantry through the monthly congregational collections.

- The striping and paint have been purchased for painting the stripes on the parking lot .
- Fundraising for the asbestos remediation and the audio system is doing well. \$11,405 have been collected so far. Thank you to all of those who have contributed.
- Spring cleanup has been scheduled for Saturday, May 18th. Everyone is encouraged to stop by and help as much as they are able. Some of the jobs planned are cleaning the flower beds and courtyard, washing windows, painting in the basement, weed trimming, and any other things that can be addressed inside and outside of the church. Many hands make light work of large jobs.
- The Properties Committee is looking for 3-5 individuals that would like to help plan the vegetation, ground cover, and use of the courtyard. Please contact the office, or F & P committee member if interested in being on the committee or if you have ideas for the courtyard.
- The committee completed its review of the continuing resolutions and submitted changes for the council to review.
- Several other projects are being addressed.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 7th.

## Happy May birthday to....

Elwood Syverson	05/01
Jacqueline Maki	05/02
David Kidd	05/03
Teresa Ellerman	05/03
Gloria Noe	05/04
Rebecca Colwell	05/04
Camron Cafferty	05/05
Russ Jones	05/06
Donna Morris	05/07
Pastor Joan Wittrock	05/07
Austin Her	05/08
James O'Keefe	05/09
Brian Bell	05/10
Emily Reigard	05/10
Gavin Gray	05/10
Ian Fenner	05/10
Kim Pufahl	05/11
Mckenna Brockman	05/12
Brenda Bryant	05/13
Diane Huebner	05/14
Riley Rotzoll	05/15
Karen Olson	05/16
Jackson Preuss	05/16
Joshua Horton	05/17
Harlow Gierhart	05/21
Kyle Aurit	05/22
Jane Madsen	05/22
Jeri Shultis	05/22
Gladys Radcliff	05/22
Michael King	05/22
Kathy Noe	05/23
James Droster	05/24
Dylan Dearth	05/24
Jerry Schroeder	05/26
Rosella Barton	05/27
James Henry	05/28
Alexis Ramer	05/28
Rosemary Dellamuth	05/29
Noah Hollis	05/29
Lorrie Schultz	05/29

## Happy May anniversary to...

Joe & Pamela Bagnowski	05/05
Ed & RJ Rogers	05/21
William & Teresa Voltz	05/31

**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.

### Save the Date for Christmas in the Dells

Bethany will again be attending Christmas in the Dells. Save the date and plan to join us on Sunday, November 3rd, for the 2:00 p.m. show. This year's cost will be \$72 which includes meal, show, tax, and tip. More information will be coming.

### Save the Date for VBS

Vacation Bible School will be July 8th - 11th this year, for ages Pre-K to 5th grade. We are still in the early stages of planning, but are planning on the evening format that was used last year. There will be more information in the June bulletin.



### Eclipse Glasses

Save your eclipse glasses and bring them to church. They will be sent to Central/South America for their upcoming eclipse this summer. Bring them on in--you will never find yours in 20 years!

### Spring cleanup

Spring cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, May 18th, 9:00 a.m. Projects are: cleaning flower beds, washing windows, painting in the basement, and any other jobs people want to tackle. Many hands make light work!

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

608-847-6690

**Thank you for your understanding, patience, and help in keeping our records up to date!**

## Fundraising Update

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Our fundraising program for the Asbestos Remediation and Audio System is off and running. The total of this project is \$52,000 and as a congregation, we are working to raise \$26,000. The Bethany Memorial Foundation has generously agreed to match our giving dollar for dollar to get us to the \$52,000.

Pledges can be made by taking an envelope from the white board in the Narthex. Payments can be made by putting your envelope in the offering plate, mailing it in, dropping it off in the office or online through Tithly using the drop down menu item "Sound System/Asbestos Remediation". The number of envelopes on the board changes from week to week as some envelopes are taken as pledges and some are replaced with new envelopes as we convert the dollars to other amounts. For example, a \$500 envelope may be replaced with five \$100 envelopes. The total dollar amount on the board has always been the \$26,000 necessary to achieve our goal amount. After just four weeks of giving we have raised \$13,345. We are off to a great start. The board will continue to be displayed in the Narthex until our goal is reached. Please consider taking 'another \$10' even if you have already given your pledge. Thank you to all who have given, those who have pledged, and those who continue to give.

A reminder to put "AUDIO" on the memo line of your check.

## Food Pantry

The Food Pantry 2023 end-of-year stats are in. We served 493 different families, which contained 222 different seniors, 664 different adults, 359 different children-for a total of 1,245 different people served. We provided up to 14 days of food each month. 157 families only came once during the year and 24 families came each month. All the other families were spread out during the year. We distributed a total 238,691# of food during the year. This does not include the extra 8,000# of limes, cucumbers, pumpkins, and bananas we shared with the community from our 4 "extra" semis who graciously shared with us this year. We also distributed 563 senior boxes with 16,890# of additional food.

Items that we need if you are out shopping: soups, canned fruit and canned veggies, canned protein like peanut butter, tuna, chicken. Your cash donations help us to purchase needed food.

We would not be here to help those families in need without the generous help of our volunteers and donors. We have a wonderful group of people to work with!

Bethany Lutheran Church is once again one of our Grand Sponsors in 2023.

Thank you so much for your gracious support.

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

### May 5 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Teresa Ellerman  
Usher Captain: Roger Dutzle

### May 12 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Brian McGuire  
Usher Captain: David Kidd

### May 19 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Jim Miller  
Usher Captain: Bill Potter

### May 26 Worship Service

Lector: Alan Abrahamson, Sr.  
Communion Assistant: Maynard Miller  
Usher Captains: Jeri Shultis and Harold Seebecker

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

## In Our Prayers

~~~ Pete Komay, Michael Voltz, 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.



| <b>*** Giving</b>                            | <b>Cash/Check</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>March 1, 2024</b>                         | \$9,419.00        |
| <b># March 6 &amp; 10, 2024</b>              | \$3,091.00        |
| <b># March 13 &amp; 17, 2024</b>             | \$9,448.00        |
| <b># March 20 &amp; 24, 2024</b>             | \$8,811.50        |
| <b>Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2024</b>       | \$2,727.00        |
| <b>Easter, March 31, 2024</b>                | \$6,450.00        |
| <b>** Online Giving Total for March 2024</b> | \$2,178.15        |

# Dates are for both the Sunday and the Lent Wednesday services, they were counted together.

\*\*\* 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.

| <b>Gen Fund</b>      | <b>March 2024 Actual</b> | <b>March 2024 Budget</b> | <b>March YTD Actual</b> | <b>March YTD Budget</b> |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>* Receipts</b>    | \$25,725.11              | \$12,500.00              | \$50,059.27             | \$37,500.00             |
| <b>Disbursements</b> | \$12,525.74              | \$16,863.00              | \$42,011.04             | \$50,591.00             |

**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**  
**bethanymaustonelca@gmail.com**