

BETHANY LUTHERAN Newsletter November 2024

A NOTE FROM PASTOR:

To the People of God at Bethany Lutheran Church,

I have had several questions recently about church membership, how it works, etc. This is likely because we just had our semi-annual congregational meeting. I thought that I would take some time to do some explaining about that.

"I heard you say that you don't care whether I'm a member or not. How come you are saying that?" I want people to know that we care about all of the people connected to our worshipping community here at Bethany. I do not ever check a list to see if you are a member, or have been, before making an emergency pastoral visit or even agreeing to officiate at a wedding or funeral service. I do my best to meet the pastoral needs of those connected to our community. It is my understanding that the leadership of our congregation like it this way. I also want everyone to know that they are welcome to participate in the vast majority of our congregation's life without being a member at all.

We do have several types of membership in the Church. The Lutheran Church typically recognizes two types of membership: Baptismal and Confirmed. A confirmed member is a person who has affirmed their baptism usually in a ceremony called Confirmation. A baptized member of God's Church is any person who has ever been baptized. A baptized member of our congregation is any member who has been baptized within the context of our worshipping community or has had their membership transferred to our community of believers. A person cannot revoke or lose their baptized status. Just like there is nothing that a person can do to cause them to lose God's love. We have a record book in the office at Bethany that shows who we know we have baptized and confirmed over the years. Bethany holds baptismal records for many people who are no longer active within our worshipping community as their baptism never goes away and does not expire.

At Bethany you might also hear someone says active or inactive member. An inactive member is anyone with a membership status that is not an active member. An active member of the congregation is defined in our congregation's constitution as having had a minimum level of participation in the life of our congregation recently (based on attendance and giving). Active, baptized members who are not seasonal or associated members are considered voting members or our congregation. Voting members are eligible to hold an elected church office and get to vote at congregational meetings. An associated member is someone who is considered a part of our worshipping community who already is a voting member of another worshipping community. They have all other rights and responsibilities of membership except they do not hold office or vote. A seasonal member is a voting member only during part of the year, typically while they are here.

I hope that this clarifies some of the language about membership that you have heard recently.
God Bless, Pastor Joan

FROM THE PRESIDENT CRANDALL GIFT IDEA SUBMISSIONS

We are creating a process to help us determine how to best use the \$255,000 gift from the Crandall Estate. We need your input.

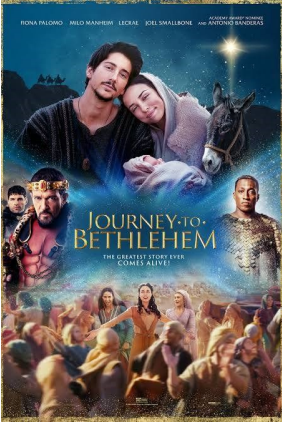
There are three ways you can provide your ideas:

1. There will be a form you can get in the narthex, fill-out, and put in the box provided.
2. You can mail your idea to church or email your idea to bethanymaustonelca@gmail.com.
3. You can talk to Pastor, Dick Pirwitz, Kathy Marose, Gary Gray or Brian McGuire – and then submit the idea in writing so we understand it and it is documented.

Note: All submissions must include your name and the date submitted.

There will be idea gathering sessions in the Fellowship Hall in place of Coffee Hour after worship on Nov. 24th and Jan. 12th where we will look at ideas already submitted and add new ones to the list.

After Jan. 12th, the Gift Team will evaluate the ideas and create a suggested plan on how to use the gift. It will be reviewed and discussed at the next council meeting. Our goal is to present it at the Annual Meeting on Jan. 19th where it will be discussed and voted on. - Dick Pirwitz



Films with Friends

The Faith & Development committee's next "Films with Friends" is scheduled for Sunday, December 1st at 5:30 p.m., featuring the film, "Journey to Bethlehem". The movie is described as a "Christmas musical for the entire family that weaves classic Christmas melodies with humor, faith, and new songs in retelling the story of Mary and Joseph and the birth of Jesus: the greatest story ever told".

So, mark your calendars and join us for a night of popcorn, fellowship, and setting the mood for the season in which we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Since our first Films with Friends was so well-attended, we will meet in the Fellowship Hall. If you want to bring camp chairs for a more comfortable seat, feel free!

Care Package Drive for Bethany's College Students

The Faith and Development Committee is gearing up for its semi-annual care package drive for Bethany's college students. The purposes of these care packages are to help remind the students that their home church is thinking about them 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. Therefore, we are looking for donations of snack items to include in the packages. We currently have 14 students that we are sending packages to.

On Monday, December 2nd at 11:30 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.

Lunch and Learn

Come and join fellow members over lunch and a discussion led by Pastor Joan. Our next discussion will be on the Big Five World Religions. Bring your own lunch and take part in the conversation on Thursday, Nov 14th, from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The Looney Lutherans

The Faith Development Committee is organizing a trip to the CAL Center in Reedsburg to see the show "The Looney Lutherans" on Sunday March 23, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. We have a block of 30 tickets reserved and they are going quickly. If you would like to join us at this show please sign up on the kiosk and make your payment at that time. The total ticket cost is \$28 and checks can be made out to Bethany with "Looney Lutherans" in the memo line and dropped off in the office. Deadline to sign up is January 15th or sooner if we sell out of our 30 tickets before then. If you have questions contact Sheri at 608-562-5112.

November Free Community Dinner

Our last free community dinner for 2024 will be on Sunday, November 17th, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. This month we will be serving hot turkey sandwiches. 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. 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.

Special Community Thanksgiving Eve Service

Join us for a special Community Thanksgiving Eve Service at Bethany Nov 27th, 7:00 p.m. There will be refreshments and fellowship following the service. The offering benefits the Emergency fund and Christmas baskets. This is an annual event hosted by the Mauston Area Ministerial Association.

October 2024 Council Highlights

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- The financial audit was completed October 9, 2024. There weren't discrepancies or other findings, although when the written report is received, there may be a recommendation or two.
- Korbin Stalsberg, Bug Stompers, removed 2 hornet's nests outside the church entry and donated to us the \$250 fee. A thank you card was sent in appreciation of their generosity.
- Crandall Estate Gift plans and process: The first Crandall gift in December 2023, was placed in a 12-month CD. This will be maturing 12/15/2024.
- \$200K from general checking is being used to purchase two 6-month \$100K CDs. This will allow us to take advantage of a 4.45% interest rate while a congregational decision is made regarding the best use of this gift.
- Fees for events: Following discussion of the proposed fee schedule policy, a motion was made by Jeri S. to accept the updated policy for the fee schedule.

Mission Committee:

- The Water Project has raised \$1,305 to date. This fundraiser will continue until Advent.
- Bethany will be hosting the distribution site for the Mauston Area Ministerial Assn. Christmas baskets. We are seeking volunteers to assist with assembly and distribution.
- They will be hosting an Angel Tree, where Bethany will be adopting a family in need for Christmas. More details to follow.

Hospitality Committee:

- They will begin planning the refreshments menu for the Thanksgiving Eve service.
- Personal notes were mailed to twelve college students, with positive feedback. Care packages for college students will be assembled Dec. 2nd at 11:30 a.m. Donations are appreciated.
- The next Community Supper will be Nov. 17th, serving hot turkey sandwiches.
- The City of Mauston Holiday Parade is Dec. 7th at 6:00 p.m. See Pastor if there is anyone interested in organizing a Bethany entry.

Worship Committee:

- The Thanksgiving Eve service (Nov 27th at 7:00 p.m.) will be hosted by Bethany. We'll have special music for the youth. We'll need ushers, but no lectors. There will be no Communion at this service.
- Christmas decorating will be on Dec. 5th at 9:30 a.m., with lunch to follow.
- Advent & Christmas schedules remain the same—Christmas Eve services at 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Christmas Day service at 9:30 a.m. will be a traditional service with Mark as lay minister. Dec. 29th will be a service of Lessons and Carols.
- The complete Kyrie will now be sung by the congregation. We'll still have a song leader for Sundays when Pastor is absent.
- Palm Sunday will be moved one week early. The Passion will be our focus on the Sunday before Easter.

Pastor's Report:

- Pastor Joan indicated an uptick in requests for benevolent funds – both to the church office and to Pastor. Bethany doesn't provide benevolent funds. The Ministerial Assn emergency funds have been fully spent for this year. One way the Bethany congregation can help is to step up our bell ringing this coming season.
- Faith Development had reached out to Sugar Creek to have them come to Bethany to speak about the camp. Stephanie, from Sugar Creek, will be here December 8th to set up a display and share information with us.

October Finance and Property Meeting

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The F & P Committee met on October 8, 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. Additional donations collected for the food pantry had not been determined yet but will also go to the Food Pantry as well.

- The bat removal project has been completed. Ray used 123 tubes of caulk filling gaps in the soffits and gaps in the church. He also did several repairs on the roof and other areas of the church.
- The locks on the front doors have been fixed and operate much better.
- BTU has been contacted regarding the thermostat for the lounge and basement and the committee is waiting for a status report.
- The council is seeking additional bids for flooring in the fellowship hall.
- The committee reviewed the proposed fee schedule for events such as weddings and funerals held at the church and recommended them to the council for approval.
- There is currently an excessive amount of funds in the checking account due to significant undesignated gifts received over the summer. The committee is making a recommendation to the council to purchase CDs with the gifts until they are needed.
- All committees are to submit their 2025 budgets to the treasurer by November 5th so they can be used in the budget making process by the F & P Committee on November 12th.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12th at 5:30 p.m.

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 Schmidt-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

Happy November anniversary to...

Robert & Linda Dallman	11/01
Dan & Tammy Remington	11/05
Donald & Marge Hoffmann	11/09
Duane & Pat Weisenhaus	11/10

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.

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

Charlyn Walter, Pat Dickman, Julianne Sanford, George Pierce, Pete Komay, Tammy Brown, Patti Thomas, 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.*****

November 3 Worship Service

Lector: Molly Shultis
Communion Assistant: TBD
Usher Captain: Roger Dutzle

November 10 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Lis Schroeder
Usher Captain: David Kidd

November 17 Worship Service

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

November 24 Worship Service

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

November Altar Guild: Amy Behling & Sheri Benson



*** Giving	Cash/Check
September 1, 2024	\$2,976.00
September 8, 2024	\$6,396.00
September 15, 2024	\$4,316.14
September 22, 2024	\$2,238.00
September 29, 2024	\$1,226.00
** Online Giving Total for September 2024	\$2,499.84

*** 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	September 2024 Actual	September 2024 Budget	September YTD Actual	September YTD Budget
* Receipts	\$21,777.25	\$12,500.00	\$392,654.06	\$ 112,500.00
Disbursements	\$12,139.49	\$15,192.00	\$124,188.11	\$146,835.00

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 608-548-5982. 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