

BETHANY LUTHERAN

Newsletter

December 2024

A NOTE FROM PASTOR:

As this newsletter is being put together many places are preparing for the holiday season. We too prepare for Christmas here at Bethany. Early this month we will have a special decoration party, the children are working on a program for us, and we are hosting the community Christmas box distribution this year. My article is shortened this month due to the need to provide space for all the awesome things that we have going on this year.

Please know that you are all more than welcome to come and participate in all of the many things that are happening this Advent at Bethany. I hope that everyone again has a enjoyable time as we prepare our hearts and minds to remember the good tidings of great joy that Jesus Christ is born. God Bless, Pastor Joan

FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE GIFT AND THE CURSE

We are in the midst of suggesting ideas for using the Crandall bequest "for God's work" (Bonnie's words). There are a wide range of suggestions being submitted and all are good.

I have a fear that, along with the blessing that came with the bequest, it could be a curse. We cannot do all the things submitted. Some people may be upset that their idea was not chosen and the congregation could be viewed as Us and Them, winners and losers. We have worked too hard to get where we are to throw it all away.

In February 2025, the Crandall Gift Team will review all ideas and prayerfully make a recommendation on what to do with the money. That list will be reviewed at a Council meeting, adjusted and published. Then we will have a special congregation meeting to discuss and finalize the list.

This will be a transparent process at each step. The list of all ideas submitted, the list presented to the Council, the list being presented to the Congregation and the final list will all be published.

Whatever we decide, Bethany will only be better at doing God's work if we work together and accept the gift and reject the curse.

SIGN UP NOW FOR POINSETTIAS!

Is there a loved one or friend you'd like to honor with a poinsettia? You can reserve a plant by filling out a "poinsettia" envelope located at the Usher's table. Cost this year is \$13 per plant. We have reserved 40 poinsettias from Blossoms and Bouquets. Checks should be made out to "Bethany" with "flower" clearly written on the memo line.



Community Dinner Thank You

Thank you to all who again made our November Free Community Drive Thru a success. This month we served 147 meals to the community. We could not have done this without generous donations from our members and the community. This month's sponsors include Thrivent, Wisconsin River Meats, Arby's, and Kwik Trip. Throughout the preparation, serving, and delivery of meals we had 15 volunteers make all of this happen. In the process we all were blessed as much as the folks receiving the meals. We are truly living out our mission statement of building unity through welcoming each other and reaching out to our greater community.

Looking for some beautiful Christmas gifts? Profits from sales go to our Youth Ministry.

Note: There is a limited supply of 25. Price is still **only \$6** per calendar (This was our price in 2004 and we have kept it for 20 years!).

Christmas Game Day

Do you celebrate Christmas with your family on alternate dates and find yourself home on Christmas day with nothing to do? Well you're not alone! This is the case for many or us. This year you are again welcome to join your Bethany Family for a Family Game Day. We will begin at noon with lunch. Hot sandwiches will be provided and attendees are asked to bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share. Bring your own beverage of choice. After lunch we will spend the rest of the afternoon playing games. We will provide some games but if you have a favorite you want to bring, you are welcome to do that. Please sign up on the kiosk so we have an idea of how many to plan for.

Looney Lutherans Reminder

There are just five spots left for Looney Lutherans on March 23rd at the CAL Center. If you are interested in attending, don't miss out, once our 30 tickets are gone we will not be adding more. The deadline to sign up is January 15th. If you have signed up please make your payment to the office. Checks can be made out to "Bethany" with "Looney Lutherans" in the memo line.

Save the Date (more details coming soon):

Sunday January 12th - "**Films with Friends**" movie night is Sunday, January 12th at 5:30 p.m. The evening's film is "The Hill", based on a true story about Rickey Hill, who overcomes physical obstacles to pursue his dream of playing baseball in the major leagues. Please plan to join us for popcorn, fellowship, and experience the new and improved sound system for your listening pleasure!

Sunday, February 9th—Valentine Party

Saturday, March 8th—Bethany Movie Day at Elroy Theater

Bethany Angel Tree

Bethany has adopted a family to help uplift them in a time of need with a special Christmas. This is a family of five having three young boys. An angel tree will be placed in the narthex with ornaments on it which request a gift for a member of this family. Each ornament will list a want or need along with the age of the child. Bethany members are encouraged to take an ornament with a gift suggestion on it and purchase the gift. These gifts should be wrapped with the ornament from the tree attached to it and returned to Bethany by December 15th. Place the gift under the angel tree and these gifts will be delivered to the family in time for Christmas. Suggestions also include gift cards for food and family gifts to help make Christmas special for this family. Please contact Kathy Marose for questions or additional information.

Advent Candle Lighting

Advent activities will include lighting of the Advent Candle. There will be a sign up sheet for families to sign up on in the Narthex.

The **Sunday School Christmas Program**, "Gifts of Love" will be performed on December 15th. Sunday school students have already begun practicing during Sunday school time. Many thanks to Diane Huebner for leading this again this year, and to Linda Bohnert for accompanying the program! There will be no Sunday school on December 22nd and December 29th. We will start back up on January 5th.



Music for Christmas Services

Our services for Christmas are Christmas Eve at 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. and Christmas Day at 9:30 a.m. If you would like to provide special music for any of these services, please call or email the church office, stating which service you would like to provide music for and what you will be performing. Please call no later than December 22nd so we have time to place it in the bulletin.

Christmas Meal Boxes Distribution

This year's giveaway of Christmas Meal Boxes will be on December 21st from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m or whenever they run out. The giveaway will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church, 701 Grove Street, Mauston, WI. If you would like to help prepare the meal boxes please join us at 4:30 p.m. on December 20th.

November 2024 Council Highlights

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Discussed the possibility of developing a 10-year long range plan, as Bethany had done years ago. This would provide Bethany with a priority project list for maintaining a pathway as we move forward.

Change to Endowment Fund member restriction: Currently, members are limited to one 2-year term after which, they must be off the committee for a period of two years, then could be back on the ballot. The committee would like this to be changed to allow them to be re-elected every two years. Approved.

The Community Thanksgiving Eve service (Nov 27th at 7:00 p.m.) will be hosted by Bethany.

Poinsettias have been ordered, envelopes are available to purchase them in honor or memory of a loved one.

Bethany will be hosting the distribution site for the Mauston Area Ministerial Assn. Christmas baskets. Pastor will share further planning details from Pastor Anita with Kathy. Bethany members responded generously for Hurricane relief. A pickup load of items was delivered to the Methodist Church for transport to North Carolina. Bethany contributed \$100 to help cover their transport costs. Monetary contributions will be directed to the Pastor in NC to be used where needed most.

The Angel Tree will be set up very soon in the Narthex. Bethany has been assigned a family of 5 – parents and 3 young boys, to provide a blessed Christmas for this family. Members select an angel from the tree, which will contain all the information they need about the person and an item of want or need Christmas. Shop for gift, wrap it, fasten the angel on the top of the gift and place it under the angel tree no later than December 15th.

The Property and Finance Committee has reviewed bids on the fellowship hall carpeting replacement. They are recommending the purchase of carpet squares. This will be built into the budget as a capital expenditure and discuss it with the congregation at the January Annual Meeting.

Dec. 1st @ 5:30 p.m. - Films with Friends, showing *Journey to Bethlehem*.

Dec. 2nd @ 11:30 a.m. - Care packages for college students will be assembled. There is a box in the narthex for donations.

Dec. 8th – Stephanie, from Sugar Creek, will be at worship with an informational table in the Narthex, a sermon and fellowship after service.

Dec. 15th - The Christmas Program.

Planning another Christmas Game Day for Bethany members from 12:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Hot sandwiches will be served, and participants may bring a dish to pass.

Lynxx fiber optic cable is now installed! There are repeaters installed so we have service from the office to the balcony to the lounge!

Pastor's Report: Pastor Joan requested March 30, 2025, off as she is getting married that weekend. Council approved, but is checking the church constitution to see if prior approval was required of the Council to get married and we did not get a chance to debate whether the groom was worthy to be Pastor's husband. This will be added to old business at the next meeting.

November Finance and Property Meeting

The F & P Committee met on November 12, 2024. The Committee approved mission support of \$1,000 to the La Crosse Synod/ELCA, \$85 to Lutheran Social Services and \$85 plus \$168 to the Mauston Food Pantry.

The committee reviewed the status of some of the projects. The parking lot has been painted and pavers have been purchased for the shed border.

The fire inspection was discussed. Items need to be removed from the electrical room next to the sacristy and the room with the water heater in the basement. The church also needs to install a Knoxbox near the entrance of the Church. This is a secure box that will contain an entrance key for firemen/first responders to use in case of an emergency. This is actually a city ordinance.

The committee is recommending the purchase of carpet squares to replace the old carpeting in the fellowship hall to the Church Council.

The committee discussed several other suggestions that had been made and will consider them in the future.

The committee reviewed the line items in the budget and made several adjustments. Gary will make the appropriate adjustments and finalize the 2025 budget for review at the December committee meeting. The budget will be reviewed with the Executive committee then presented to the congregation at the annual meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10th at 5:30 p.m.

Happy December birthday to....

Austin Remington	12/01
Jodi Hoffman	12/02
Emma Ragan	12/02
Tammy Zoller	12/02
Lila Goetzke	12/03
Ken Sanford	12/04
Charitee Seebecker	12/04
Robert Bohnert	12/05
Pam Holmes	12/06
Scarlett Smith	12/06
Alyssa Kidd	12/07
Marissa Nava	12/08
Sara Barton	12/09
Brody Holzberger	12/09
Glen Schroeder	12/09
Marjo Staehling	12/10
Norma Miller	12/11
Wayne Morris	12/11
Tammy Hansen	12/13
Tammy Remington	12/13
Jacob Schiller	12/16
Larry Arens	12/17
Charlotte Lyman	12/18
Brian Colwell	12/20
Ruth Marose	12/21
Myles Miller	12/21
Patti Thomas	12/21
JoAnn Gensch	12/22
Wendy McGuire	12/22
Michaela Honnold	12/23
Jean Schurmann	12/23
Brian McGuire	12/24
Madelin Buda	12/27
Mark Benson	12/28
Craig Dallman	12/28
Richard Noe	12/31

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 December anniversary to...

Alan and Dianne Peterson	12/03
Wally and Ray Feldman	12/23
Robert and Ruth Pfaff	12/25
Jim and Teri Webster	12/29

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.

The CPKC Holiday Train is coming to Mauston this year!

The Holiday Train will be here on December 9th at 4:15 p.m. at the Division Street crossing. Please bring a canned food item or make a monetary donation to receive a free coffee from Rise and Grind or cocoa from Peace Presbyterian Church. The Ron and Barb Brunner Foundation will be matching your cash donations to the pantry. The Bank of Mauston is doubling donations dropped off at the Bank of Mauston during the Month of November and up to the Train Day.

Food Pantry News

A huge "Thank you" to all our area churches for their support during the past year! So far this year we have served over 500 different families. Pantry Families served in Mauston School District for October was 233 which contained 298 adults 128 seniors and 138 children. Our numbers are steadily increasing and the cost of food we need to purchase to keep ahead of the need is also on the rise. We could not do this without your generous help. Please remember that November and December are the time your donations really shine to make sure we have enough in our budget to distribute the over 300,000# of food during the year. Our budget for the year is \$70,000 and it all comes from individuals, businesses, clubs, school children, services groups and churches and grants. We have no paid staff at all. We have between 40-50 people who volunteer at the pantry to make it work. However you have helped this past year - volunteering, donations, and prayers — please know it is greatly needed and appreciated.

In Our Prayers

Darren Honnold, Charlyn Walter, Pat Dickman, 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.*****

December 1 Worship Service

Lector: Becky Colwell
Communion Assistant: Mark Dahlke
Usher Captain: Roger Dutzle

December 8 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Danielle Knutson
Usher Captain: David Kidd

December 15 Worship Service

Communion Assistant: Teresa Ellerman
Usher Captain: Bill Potter

December 22 Worship Service

Lector & Communion Assistant: Marjo Staehling
Usher Captains: Jeri Shultis and Harold Seebecker

December 24 4:00 p.m. Worship Service

Lector: Darryl Teske
Communion Assistants: Darryl Teske, Mark Behling, Mark Dahlke
Usher Captains: TBD

December 24 8:00 p.m. Worship Service

Lector: Karen Fritz
Communion Assistants: Karen Fritz, Sheri Benson, Maynard Miller
Usher Captains: TBD

December 25 Worship Service

Lector: Elley Dahlke
Usher Captain: TBD

December 29 Worship Service

Usher Captain: William Potter

December Altar Guild:

Rebecca Colwell and Sharon Pufahl



*** Giving	Cash/Check
October 6, 2024	\$5,193.00
October 13, 2024	\$2,111.00
October 20, 2024	\$1,910.00
October 27, 2024	\$3,008.00
** Online Giving Total for October 2024	\$2,504.84

*** 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	October 2024 Actual	October 2024 Budget	October YTD Actual	October YTD Budget
* Receipts	\$9,986.51	\$12,500.00	\$402,640.57	\$125,000.00
Disbursements	\$18,203.16	\$15,163.00	\$142,391.27	\$161,998.00

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