

The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
1-805-688-4637
www.bethanialutheran.net

August 2020

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Pastor Chris's Message

Life right now seems like an endless conversation with myself about the state of our country, especially with regard to COVID-19, and where I'm at emotionally. There are moments when I'm feeling like I'm managing okay and I can go the next 6 or so months with things as they are (not that I want it, but I can do it), and then there are moments where I feel like I can't make it to the end of the day if I don't hug a friend or spend time in close proximity with loved ones. I feel like I'm perpetually taking stock of life right now and there's no consistent answer.

When people today find out or already know I'm a pastor, one of the first questions they have is how are things going without us being able to gather for worship. I'm usually struck by the question because that's not really been the central part of my identity as a pastor, nor do I think it's the central identity of who we are as a church. There are churches whose worship services are everything to them, but I don't feel like that's us.

Don't get me wrong, worship is a huge part of who we are as Christians at Bethania, but it's not the centerpiece. Right now that centerpiece is the Food Distribution, but throughout the year, I would say worship is a significant, but equal part to the other reasons we come together throughout the year: our ministries, our celebrations, our community outreach, our ongoing partnership with the Santa Ynez Valley, etc. Worship is the space in which we are refueled, in which we give thanks and praise, in which we petition God as a community, and then as we are sent out to be God's presence our worship is enriched by those experiences and those experiences are enriched by that worship, as though it's one ongoing cyclical pattern.

Right now, we're able to have a semblance of our worship service via YouTube and I know for many of us it feels like this falls short of gathering in person. But I don't think it's the experience of worshipping in the building versus worshipping online that we're missing. Rather I think it's the gathering in community, it's the conversations that happen before and after, it's the communal singing in which we get to participate, it's laughing together at one of my hilarious jokes I tell in my sermons, it's being moved to tears by a musical piece from our musicians and choir; in short, it's the experience of community that I think we're missing most, at least, that's a big part of what it is for me.

I, along with our committees and council have been very intentional about trying to make Bethania a church where people can come together not just in worship, but through an array of experiences and feel that sense of community, knowing that God is just as present in that community as God is in our worship service. What's painful about this pandemic is that it's the community experience that has been devastated the most. We aren't able to physically gather in the ways we used to, and no amount of technology can fill that hole. I realize the pain in this and not just with regard to our church lives, but with our personal lives as well. I understand the pain because I feel it too. For me, community is a sacred thing, something that runs almost contrary to the rugged individuality that comes with being part of Western Society. That's why I've been so intentional about emphasizing community experiences within and without of our worship services. And it's why I feel

the same pain and frustration you're feeling in missing out on it and I'm so sorry we're going through this.

While we've been intentional about the experience of community at Bethania, I think our country as a whole has been learning about how much we depend on our connection with one another. I honestly believe that will be one of the greatest lessons that comes out of this if we allow ourselves the foresight to learn it. In a country where we celebrate our individuality so much, we've missed how sacred community really is. What's the saying? You don't know what you have until it's gone...or some version of that. Community is sacred, and we're learning that now. There's a reason Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered, I am there among them."

In a Beacon article that seems to focus so much on what we're missing and how painful that it is, my overall point is this: COVID-19 is temporary, albeit longer than we hoped, and we will have a moment when we come out of all this and we will get to reevaluate our identity as people. The lessons we're (hopefully) learning now about how sacred community is will have a chance to reshape who we are moving forward. While I so wish this were over now and while I wish I could take away the pain and frustration we're feeling, I ask you to be intentional about learning the lessons being presented to us, about how meaningful community is, and to pay attention to those things that inhibit our experience of community in our lives. Take hope in knowing that when we are able to gather again, the experiences of community we've worked so hard at establishing as a church might take on a new light of sacredness. God might shine even brighter through our experiences of one another. While the pain of something lost is hard, our experiences of community are not lost forever and in fact, those experiences might be more meaningful when they happen again. Right now, knowing that is what keeps me moving and I hope it helps you do the same.

**In Christ's Love,
Pastor Chris**

Youth and Family Ministry

Peace to you and your loved ones,

Our scheduled events have pended due to our current pandemic; including End of Summer BBQ, Danish Days, Oktoberfest, Halloween Party, etc. We will keep you informed if anything changes. I am hopeful for January events to continue as planned, such as Rummage Sale, Youth Bake Sale, and other fundraisers.

ELCA Youth Gathering to Minneapolis is still planned for June 2021. If any youth (high school students) and parents would like to attend, please contact me.

Vacation Bible School will be July 2021. Each year VBS grows in attendance as children excitedly return and bring more friends along. Our volunteers are the most wonderful and integral parts of this event! If you'd like to assist in decorations now, there are plenty of designs to get started on. Please email me for requests.

If you have any items to lend or would like to donate, here is a list of supplies for next year: masking tape, silver duct tape, stacks of white & blue & black paper, X-Large cardboard boxes to build a bridge, white & blue fairy lights, white & blue iridescent paper, polyester fiberfill/ batting, artificial Christmas trees, 2 pairs of rain boots (adult size), plastic toy knight's helmet

**Stay safe and healthy,
Livier Ghamari-Brown - Director of Youth & Family Ministry
livierghamari@yahoo.com
(909) 962-9366**

Faith in Action

Cheer Cards

Our thanks to Gerry Hardy who has been sending cheer cards and sympathy cards to people connected to Bethania. Gerry is no longer able to continue with this service. We appreciate her many years of connecting to people in this way on behalf of the congregation.

We are happy to announce that Betty Madsen will take over to send cards to those who are in need of a card.

- **Kristyl Downey**

Hunger in our County

"Poverty is a very complicated issue, but feeding a child isn't." Jeff Bridges, actor

There are so many living right in our own county who are struggling to put food on the table. Our friends at Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz are among those struggling, in addition to many people here in the Santa Ynez Valley. In addition to their usual struggles with low wages and the vigors of field work, these agricultural workers are also living with surges of COVID-19 in their populations.

Pastor Esteban and his wife Angie at Iglesia continue to ask for help as their pantry is out of basic food needs for their members. If you can help by donating some of the items below, please leave them in the box in the sanctuary or contact me for drop off. Your donations are making a difference in a life and in families of hard-working people. You are helping to keep food on the table for the children of field workers who struggle to make ends meet.

Urgently needed are:

Dry Beans	Rice	Maseca (corn flour)	All Purpose Flour	Dish Soap
Small Pasta	Sugar	Salt	Snacks (such as Cookies)	Coffee
Bottled Juice	Shampoo	Feminine Products	Laundry Detergent	
Bleach and Cleaning Products		Baby Diapers (All sizes especially 5&6)		

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for all our ministries at Bethania. Daily we are reaching out to those in need.

- **Linda Marzullo**

Brown Bag Senior Breakfast: Take August off! *Next packing will be in September*

Thanks to all the donations and our packers who worked at record speed, we will not need to pack in August for the Senior Breakfasts. **Our next packing date will be set in September.** Watch the Beacon and church emails for more info.

But we continue to collect items for the bags for our next packing date. The church is open daily (usually from 9-5) and you can drop off items inside. Or, you can drop them on the packing day.

Protein Drinks (such as Ensure or Atkins)
Protein Bars

Soft Granola/Cereal Bars
Oatmeal Packets (Protein type)

Instant Cup of Soup/Lunch or Noodles
Pudding (non-refrigerated)

Fruit Cups or Applesauce

Small Juice Boxes or Plastic Bottles of Fruit Juices (such as Apple, Cranberry, Orange)

A big THANK YOU for your donations and support.

Our little brown bags are for SYV seniors who need to take medications in the morning with food, and would otherwise have nothing to eat with their pills due to financial constraints or physical limitations. Currently we are helping seniors with breakfast bags three times a week. Our most recent numbers have shown about 660 bags per month, unless the numbers go up again. This ministry continues to be a vital need for our area and much appreciated by those who receive the bags.

Your participation, in whatever way you are able, makes a difference in the health and happiness of someone living right here in our valley. Thank you!

Linda Marzullo, Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
688-5219, 688-3059 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Emergency Food Distribution Site at Bethania **Drive up and Walk up - Tuesdays, 5:15-6:45 pm**

Bethania continues operating as an Emergency USDA Food Distribution site. We receive food deliveries from SB County FoodBank in the morning each Tuesday around 10 am, which we then sort and bag at 11 am to give out to families. In addition, we purchase food items to supplement these bags, which at times are only a few items from FoodBank. Your donations and those of many others have continued to make this possible thank you! So many people coming through our Tuesday lines have expressed their appreciation and gratitude that we are helping them during this difficult time. Distribution is through drive up or walk up each Tuesday. There are no restrictions on income or family size at this time.

We can always use donations of protein items (such as canned chicken, tuna, chili) and things such as macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, rice, peanut butter, and cereal. Donations can be left in the church or you can contact me to drop off items. We also distribute diapers and wipes, which are very needed. The last week of distribution before the Beacon deadline (July 21), we **distributed over 6,000 Diapers and hundreds of packages of wipes**. We also served **389 Households with a total of 1,516 Individuals**.

We could not do this without our "army" of volunteers, who are all amazing. I am truly grateful for each and every one of them. This is an incredibly rewarding and emotional experience for many. We all feel blessed to be able to help these people who come to us in great need.

If you would like to help, please contact me. **We will be needing more helpers when school resumes, whether it be in person or distance learning, as we will lose some of our long-term helpers.** Too many people makes it difficult for us all to be safe, unfortunately; but too little make the tasks to be done extra hard and extra exhausting. This is why we really need people to sign up in advance. Anyone interested in attending should contact me: **vikingpressprint@verizon.net**

We practice COVID-19 safety procedures and have strict guidelines we must follow or risk being shut down. If you have been sick in any way in the previous 7 days, you cannot come to help. Additionally, if you are in a risk category, please do not come and endanger yourself. Be aware that we are moving

a lot of heavy canned items from pallets and into bags, and then later in the day, outside to be distributed and into the cars. Hard work, heavy lifting, and a great workout.

We continue to ask for your prayers and support for this mission. I continue to be proud and in awe of our church and our volunteers as we complete our 19th week of service this week (Tuesday, July 28th).

Linda Marzullo
Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
688-5219, 688-3059 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Blessing Box and Blessing Bags Continue Strong

The use of the **Blessing Box** in front of our church has continued strong. Many times we are filling it 9 times a day to keep it stocked. If you are interested in helping, just drop off your items in the box itself. You can also contact us for a day/time to sign up to help check the box.

With so many people struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic, we also have made up food **Blessing Bags**. These Blessing Bags are located in the narthex of the church, so they may be picked up any day between 9 am and 5 pm.

If you or someone you know is in need, please be aware that these daily food programs exist at Bethania as well as our USDA Tuesday Food Distribution, from 5:15-6:45 pm each Tuesday.

Items needed for the Blessing Box include canned and dried foods, snacks, cereal, coffee, condiments, cleaning supplies (such as dish soap, laundry soap, toilet bowl cleaners), cooking oil, coffee, personal care items, meal kits, tuna, chicken, mac & cheese, basically whatever you use in your household, we would like to have to distribute. Feel free to put your items straight into the box on the Atterdag Road side of the church. Or, contact me if you like: (805) 688-5219 or (805) 688-3059. You may also email me at vikingpressprint@verizon.net if you need to arrange to meet.

THANK YOU to all who have contributed items, donated, and helped to keep this project going. Our goal with this the Blessing Box was to have the community be able to access assistance at any time, without any stigma, from the items within it. Special thanks to Elizabeth Breen, Donna Hinsbeeck and Rick Marzullo who are all assisting in keep our "mighty pantry on a post" filled for our visitors.

- Linda Marzullo

PS: Editor's Correction! Last month's letter was not from an elderly woman who used the box, but rather a friend who walks by the box daily. She was writing to someone connected to our church. As an assignment from her own church, she was writing about where she could see the Holy Spirit in action and she chose our little Blessing Box. I apologize for the inaccurate information in last month's Beacon.

Grocery Bags Are Needed

We currently need brown paper grocery bags and plastic bags for our emergency food distribution. You can drop them off in the narthex or at the Church Office. You may send also contact us at 805-688-4637 or bethanialutheranch@gmail.com and we will find a way to get the bags.

- Kristyl

Noisy Sunday, Aug. 23: Items for Kits

The next “Noisy Sunday” is coming on Aug. 23 We will only be together virtually in worship but we can still make a joyful noise.

It is incredible to think about how we can change someone’s life by providing pens, pencils and paper. Or how we can help someone keep healthy by providing a bar of soap and a towel. These are small things that add up to a much larger picture. When we collect the items for completing our Day of Service kits, each kit we complete helps someone who is struggling with their daily challenges.

We have started collecting the items below, and will purchase more items from any “Noisy Sunday” or designated donations we receive. Right now “Back to School” specials are on I found crayons for \$0.25 and pencil sharpeners for \$0.47, along with \$0.25 paper, all at WalMart. Almost every store is having a great sale. If you would like to donate items, you may purchase them and drop them in the narthex, deliver to church office, or contact Linda Marzullo for pick up (805-688-5219 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net).

The completed kits will be distributed globally by Lutheran World Relief to areas most in need. This also includes areas of the U.S. (We will be packing them on our social distanced, Day of Service Event, Sept. 13th. Watch for more info.)

Items needed are:

For Personal Care Kits:

1. Bath size towels (light to medium weight, between 20”x40” & 27”x52”), dark colors preferred
2. Bars of soap (4-5 oz., any brand, in original wrapping 2 per kit)
3. Toothbrush (adult size, in original packaging bulk buys can be repackaged by us)
4. Comb, sturdy wide toothed
5. Nail clippers (with or without nail files)

For School Supply Kits:

1. 70 sheet College ruled Notebooks (spiral bound)
2. Rulers with centimeters and inches
3. Pencil sharpeners
4. Blunt tip scissors
5. #2 Pencils
6. Ballpoint (not gel) Pens, Black or Blue ink
7. 2.5” Erasers
8. Box of Crayons (16 or 24 count)

“Make change for the better” on Noisy Sunday! Send in your donated items, check, coins or cash and make a joyful noise as we work together. Because together, we can CHANGE our world!

**- Linda Marzullo, Chair
Social Ministry Committee**

Notes from Tom & Carolynn's Garden!

Thanks to everyone who came to pick Boysenberries and enjoy them. Thank you also for your kind donations to the Produce Table. (The Social Ministry Committee will decide where the donations are most needed and can do the most good.)

We have enjoyed our first Tomatoes of the season and they have been wonderful! In the coming weeks I suspect that Tomatoes will be coming on strong, as well as the zucchini, Armenian cucumbers, bell peppers, gladiolas, and Patti Pan squash (both light green and the new dark green). The Thompson seedless grapes will be ripening later this month.

If you are interested in any of the above, please call Tom and Carolynn Petersen at 805-688-6243 for an update on what is currently available. You may harvest your own, pick it up or even have it delivered!

We have been putting squash and cucumbers in the Blessing Box as well as donating vegetables to the Tuesday Food Distribution. We encourage any gardeners who have an abundance to do the same.

Thank you for continuing to support this program.

- Tom and Carolynn Petersen

Garage Clean-Out

We are preparing to convert the office garage into a food storage/food pantry area! This is part of the church's long term plan. We will be emptying the garage in order to work on construction for the first phase. If you or your committee have items in the garage, please pick them up by contacting the church office or let us know what needs to be saved **by Aug. 4th**. Otherwise, items which are not identified as necessary will be discarded. Thank you for your help and support of this much needed project.

Linda Marzullo

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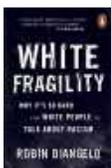
Events and Occasions

Theology Pub

Theology Pub will be gathering on Zoom on Aug. 13 at 7pm for our final Open Topic Night series. An email will be sent out with the link to join on Zoom and we'll post the link on social media. See you then!



Book Club



Book Club will be continuing on Zoom in August and we're continuing with White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo. If you would like to join, an email will be sent out with the Zoom link. We'll be gathering virtually on Aug. 27 at 2 pm to discuss chapters 4-6.

Church Business

Council Meeting Report

The July 2020 monthly Council meeting was held at 7:00 pm on July 16, 2020.

Members present were Emily Abello, Wendy Bevier, Josh Bratt, Pastor Chris, Stewart Fries, Lynne Hemming, Carol Lake, Carolyn Schuit, and Anne Twigg. Lori McConnell and Jeanelle Needham were not present. Ron Walsh was also present at the meeting.

The July 2020 Council meeting was again conducted via Zoom Conference technology.

Pastor Chris proposed new guidelines for managing church accessibility going forward. The Council discussed these new guidelines and upon motion duly made and seconded, it was approved that there will be no sleeping over (except for extreme cases at the Pastor's discretion); that the door for the sacristy be locked during the week and unlocked for worship and church sanctuary events; and that the sanctuary can be used as a place of respite during open hours.

Pastor Chris provided a further update on the actions taken by the church in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, including:

- Food distribution still serving approximately 1,400 per week

The council also discussed:

- Changes made to the management and reporting of designated funds
- Application for a new credit card for the Social Ministry Committee for the Food Distribution Program
- An update on the application for an additional PPP loan
- Formation of a "Financial Planning" subcommittee

The Council discussed steps necessary to continue to support the Food Distribution Program when school resumes. To that end, the Council approved an expenditure of up to \$2,500 from the Memorials Fund to be used to purchase and install a 10 x 10 Tuff Shed in the back lot to move items currently stored in the garage. This would enable the garage to be retrofitted for use in the Food Distribution Program.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 20, 2020.

**The Peace of Christ be with you all,
Stewart Fries, Bethania Council President**

805-245-0041

Treasurer's Report - June Financial Status

Balance sheet:

- General checking has cash available. We will have to see what next month brings.
- Money market fund has \$108,100.55
- All liabilities are current and all payables are current.
- The Payroll Protection Program has \$427 remaining.
- You will note that the Balance Sheet has several new entries. We have moved the food distribution, memorials, and PPP loan and placed them as fund liabilities. This eliminates the need to keep this in the pass through and enables us to distribute funds as needed, rather than clear them out monthly from the pass through. This was requested by Stewart, Linda Marzullo, Donna Hinsbeek, Pastor Chris, Ron & Lori. The accounting is much cleaner this way and conform to GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles).

Profit & Loss, Budget Performance:

Income:

- Offerings for the month were \$7370.16 below budget
- We are now using the \$10,000 from Endowment. That income is reflected account 4040 (miscellaneous receipts) and now shows as income.
- Non-member giving is up.
- Child care reimbursements were suspended while the program was closed, and the church paid utilities and Eileen's salary for the last two months. In July the preschool will resume reimbursement to the church.
- VBS contributions (account 4003) were not received as we have not held VBS.

Expenses:

- As part of the PPP loan, the church paid part of the payroll for the pre-school, and that is reflected in account 5028. The funding came from the PPP loan. June was the last month to pay the preschool payroll.
- Staff expenses, office administration expenses, meeting expenses, property expenses, and utilities were all under budget. The church also paid the preschool utilities for the last two months (again from the PPP loan)
- A payment was made for liability insurance - \$975.00 which explains the over budget amount for account 5061 (liability insurance).

Overall:

Considering our drop in offerings, our financial condition is not great, but not nearly as bad as it could have been (thanks to PPP loan and endowment gift). Going forward will likely present more challenges.

Expressions of Gratitude

Dear Members of Bethania Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your generous scholarship (from the Endowment Fund). I was so grateful and happy to find out that I was selected as a recipient.

I am planning to attend Pepperdine University in the fall. As of now, I am undecided on what I will study there; I have many interests so I am excited to start taking classes to discover my options!

By awarding me the Endowment Fund Scholarship, you have lightened the financial weight that a college institution brings - especially a private one. I had hesitations about attending a private school due to the significant price difference. But after careful consideration, I am so thankful to be going to a small school where it will be possible to explore different majors and receive personalized guidance.

Your support is not only financially significant and helpful to me, but it has expanded my appreciativeness of the community in which I have lived my whole life. I will be sending a proof of registration as soon as one becomes available.

Thank you again for yours support!

Sincerely,
Alexis Hemming

In Our Hearts, In Our Prayers

We uplift in prayer the following people in our congregation and community. May we minister to and bless all who need God's help.

For Comfort for the Family and Friends of Gordon Hollrah, Suzanne's father. Gordon died June 2020

For Comfort for the Family and Friends of Pastor Clayton Nielsen. Clayton died July 19, 2020.

Andy Blanton, Dennis Bornhoff, Annette Clausen, Sharon Espinoza, Chris Frederiksen, Sheldon & Pat Green, Shannon Hazard, Belle Hoyer, Suzanne Hollrah, Jennifer Howell, Glen Jacobsen, Michael Jech, Robert & Gail Jennings, Gladys Jorgensen, Jeanne Labarge, Betsy & Steve Logan, Ariana Macias, John Marzullo, Sheila Mee, Brian Merrick, Denise Morris, Eric and Mallory Oftebro, Barbara & Charles Osborn, Marie Ostertag, Kate Pearrrson, Chèle Ludwig Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Joyce Purvis, Tim Reed, Judy Stamat, David & Yolanda Yanez, and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.

In Celebration of Kinsley Kay Eck, born July 10, 2020. Kinsley is the new granddaughter of Melissa Eck.

Southwest California Synod News

The Rev. Murray D. Finck, who previously served three full terms as bishop of the neighboring Pacifica Synod, has accepted appointment by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to become interim bishop of the Southwest California Synod on August 1, 2020. He will take over from the Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, who is leaving office on July 31 to assume the presidency of United Lutheran Seminary in Pennsylvania. Bishop Finck acted as Bishop Erwin's official mentor when Erwin was elected bishop in 2013.

Bishop Finck is no stranger to our synod, and served as pastor in congregations in various parts of California. He has broad and long service in Synod leadership, having served as an Assistant to the Bishop in the Pacifica Synod before his own election to the office in 1998. A graduate of Christ Seminary—Seminex in St. Louis, he served congregations in Fresno, Los Baños, and Garden Grove before moving to Synod work in 1993. He is expert in church planting, church growth, and mission planning. He also has extensive overseas church experience, and fostered the Pacifica Synod's still-strong relationship with the Lutheran Church in Borneo, where he still has friendships.

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