



The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
1-805-688-4637
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March 2021

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Pastor Chris's Message

One year. This month will be one year since the pandemic started in our area. I don't even have to think long to remember that March 8th was our last indoor worship service. I did a baptism that Sunday. March 15th we closed for indoor worship and we have not been back since. This is not an anniversary worth celebrating, but I do think it's an anniversary that bears a lot of fruit when reflected upon.

What stands out for me are the many emotional places this pandemic has taken me and how each of those places correlates with a general point in time in the last year. I remember the absolute fear of uncertainty I felt in the beginning in navigating something our community hasn't been through and how this will impact our congregation. I also remember towards the beginning how the Himalayas had been seen clearly for the first time in decades, how dolphins swam again in the canals of Venice, how freeways were empty during rush hour and how our planet was receiving a reprieve from human activity while we were lamenting the loss of our own activity—and how few people are talking about the significance of these phenomena a year later. A few months in I remember the anger and despair I experienced while countries like New Zealand and South Korea were returning to normal activities because of their rapid and communal response to this pandemic while our cases were continuing to rise. It feels like forever ago that the scarcity of toilet paper, sanitizer and surgical masks gave way to seeing these things line shelves in abundance and surgical masks being discarded on our streets by former wearers. More recently, I think upon the holiday surges and how we recently passed the horrifying landmark of 500,000 deaths and how this is starting to give way to the hope of an increasing vaccine supply that will bear maximum effectiveness if we can maintain certain personal guidelines for just a bit longer. Ultimately, it feels like several lifetimes have been experiences in the last year, which brings me to my central point.

We have just spent a year in the midst of collective trauma, personally and collectively. It has sent us through the entire spectrum of emotions of fear, anger, distrust, despair, grief, denial, acceptance, resolve, hope, relief, gratitude, and so many more that go unnamed. It's not normal, it's not something we have been prepared for, and there's no rulebook or guide for how we should navigate or what results we should hope for to know we're on the right track. In fact, I think part of the struggle is that we either expect or are trying to force a sense of what used to be normal within this process. As we enter the one-year anniversary of this pandemic, there must be space to just acknowledge that magnitude of what we're going through and allow ourselves the grace to celebrate simply making it. I don't feel there is room to force or even expect anything else.

One year in and we aren't through it yet. But I believe the beginning of the end has arrived. The light at the end of the tunnel is taking greater shape. While the effects will continue to press in on us, the only thing I feel qualified to say in looking back on this last year is to allow yourself grace. You have gone through something, are going through something, tremendously difficult. Simply offer yourself grace and extend grace to others when you can. A time of reflection, learning, and growth will come, and I wish this anniversary was offering that space, but I think to push on to finally be done with this pandemic, all we need is grace.



In God's Grace and Love,
Pastor Chris Brown

Youth and Family Ministry

Happy Spring,

Virtual Sunday School continues on our Bethania YouTube channel. Attachments and materials list are shown in the weekly service email.

Our large scheduled social events have pended due to our current pandemic. I am hopeful that we may organize the Rummage Sale, Youth Bake Sale, and other fundraisers later this year.

RECRUITING NOW!!!

Vacation Bible School will be **July 2021**. Each year grows in success because of Bethania's helpful volunteers. Please let me know if you can help.

Still in search of the following items:

Masking tape & Silver duct tape
X-Large cardboard boxes to build a bridge
White & Blue iridescent paper
Artificial Christmas trees

Stacks of white & blue & black paper
White & Blue fairy lights
Polyester fiberfill/ batting
2 pairs of adult size rain boots

Be well,

Livier Ghamari-Brown, Director of Youth & Family Ministry

livierghamari@yahoo.com

(909) 962-9366

Bethania Preschool & After School

A year ago on March 16, 2020, the Preschool and After School Programs closed by state mandate....we missed the leprechauns...but we are ready and waiting for them this year!! (Socially distanced of course!) They will show up in the evening full of mischief of all kinds. But as usual, they will leave behind a bit of gold for the children to enjoy. Our alphabet learning is almost at its end and the preschoolers are getting their numbers and shapes, as well as different concepts down pat. We really see them turn a corner with their learning in the Spring.

Summer and Fall registration is underway. Due to COVID we are still limited to our class size but hope to get as many in and off our wait list as possible.

Look for our Touch a Truck Event to come in the Fall versus March as in years past. This year we will really need your support to get money put back in our fundraiser account to help run the programs.

We are doing our best here at Bethania to make the School Age children's lives as normal as possible. Too many children today are suffering from depression, anxiety and stress all related to COVID and online learning. We are hopeful that the children will be able to return to in class learning soon, but until they can, we will continue to be here for them, nurturing them through this difficult time.

May the roads rise to meet you.

May the wind be at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

The rain fall soft upon your fields

And, until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

**Blessings,
Eileen**

Faith in Action

Thrivent Action Team Project



Jim and I dropped off several bottles of salad dressing (purchased with a Thrivent Action Team card) at Bridge House in Lompoc. Bridge House gets much of their food from FoodBank but doesn't get enough salad dressing.

Brown Bag Breakfasts for Seniors: March 14th Next Packing Day

Our second 2021 socially distanced Brown Bag Breakfast packing day will be on **March 14**. Daylight Savings Time begins that day, so make sure to set your clocks forward Saturday night so you can come and help out.

Set up will be at 9:30 and packing begins at 10:30. We will pack in the church, maintaining strict distancing and sanitizing procedures. If you feel able to help, please be aware that you will need to follow our guidelines for this project in order to keep everyone as safe as possible.

In February we packed a whopping 1043 bags! Currently the deliveries to seniors are amounting to 80 bags three times a week. Thanks to Kristyl and Jim Downey, who used their Thrivent funds to help purchase extra supplies for us to pack. We also used some of our grant funds from the Kei Lin Foundation, which is supporting us again this year.

Great job to everyone who helps in some way with this project. YOU have all made a difference in the lives of these seniors. Every item you donate, every dollar you contribute, goes directly to helping a local senior. This is definitely a team effort – every contribution and every packer counts.

The bags we make up are intended to provide items for local seniors which can be eaten while taking medications and to guarantee a morning meal (and an afternoon snack – and even sometimes a midnight snack as one of the recipients let us know).

The church is open daily (usually from 9-5) and you can drop off any donated items you would like inside or at the church office in addition to bringing items to us on packing day. You can also make a donation and earmark it "Brown Bag Breakfasts" so we can go do the shopping. Any and all help is much appreciated.

Protein Drinks (such as Ensure or Atkins)
Protein Bars
Instant Cup of Soup/Lunch or Noodles
Pudding (non-refrigerated)

Soft Granola/Cereal Bars
Oatmeal Packets (Protein type)
Fruit Cups or Applesauce
Small Juice Boxes or Plastic Bottles of
Fruit Juices (such as Apple, Cranberry, Orange)

Each bag created by us makes a difference in the health and happiness of someone living right here in our valley.

–Linda Marzullo
Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
805-688-5219, 805-688-3059 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Photos from Our Brown Bag Breakfasts Packing Day in February (Thanks to Livier Ghamari Brown and Kristyl Downey for the Photos)



Food Distribution Continues on Tuesdays

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.”
– Sherry Anderson

We are approaching one complete year of food distribution on Tuesdays at Bethania – Wow. We began this monumental undertaking on March 24, 2020. I was working on my annual report, and it is interesting to note that our average number of households served weekly is 312 to date. Total number of individuals served through the end of February is 59,250.

This is astonishing to me – at the beginning we thought this would last a couple of months! The continued need for the food distribution right here in the SYV is eye opening for all of us.

Our volunteers and donors make this huge effort continue to be possible. We could not have done any of this without our wonderful volunteers and the support of so many donors. We have not used any church funds for the Food Distribution. It has been completely funded by donations. We have had incredible support from the community and foundations to help us with this work.

Bethania’s Emergency USDA Food Distribution site is every Tuesday from 5:15-6:45 pm. Distribution is through drive up or walk up line. There are no restrictions on income or family size at this time. We serve people from all walks of life, and in all types of circumstances. We have people coming for food from teenagers up to 92 years old.

Here are the numbers we served in February:

February 2	288 Households	1096 Individuals
February 9	331 Households	1236 Individuals (101 new this month)
February 16	315 Households	1161 Individuals (62 new this month)
February 23	348 Households	1328 Individuals (59 new this month)

We can always use donations of protein items (canned chicken, tuna, macaroni & cheese, peanut butter) and staples such as canned vegetables, pasta and sauce, jelly, honey, cereal, soup and chili. Donations can be left in the church or you can contact me to drop off items. **We also distribute diapers and wipes, along with incontinence and feminine hygiene items, which are very needed.** Donations are appreciated in these areas also.

If you would like to help, please contact me. We appreciate and value every volunteer who assists us with this monumental task and cannot thank them enough. Our Tuesdays are split into shifts, with the unloading crew coming in at 9:30 am to unload the trucks and move the tons of food from FoodBank. Bag and produce packers arrive between 10:30 and 11:00 am. Distribution helpers come around 4:45 pm for the evening distribution. Clean up helpers are always welcome at the end of the night.

We continue to need your prayers and support for this mission, which is making a difference in so many lives here in our area.

–Linda Marzullo
Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
805-688-5219 (Work), 805-688-3059 (Home) or vikingsprint@verizon.net

Food Needs at Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz

Our friends at Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz have many families who are currently in quarantine due to COVID-19. There have also been many deaths, including in Angie's family (Pastor Esteban's wife and the church administrator). Please pray for her and for all members of Iglesia who are struggling with hardships both financial and emotional in nature.

Pastor Esteban and his wife Angie are taking care of these families by bringing them meals and helping with their other needs. They are distributing food to those in their congregation who are in need daily. It is sad to think that the people who pick our food for us do not have enough to eat. Recently our Bethania funds purchased 29 gifts cards for these families, to help purchase food items at FoodsCo.

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. If you would like to make a financial donation, please be sure to earmark it for "Iglesia". Iglesia could also use additional financial support at this time to help put gas in their van so they can travel, buy needed items (such as diapers, sanitary napkins and formula) and help with emergencies.

Most Needed:

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

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for our friends at Iglesia.

– Linda Marzullo

Flowers for Residents of Atterdag and Friendship House



Three "flower angels" (Caro Stinson and Nancy and Sarah Puder) make up small bouquets of flowers and take them to residents of Atterdag Village (all levels of care) and Friendship House. If you could like to assist the angels, you can give them small jars (for example, jars for jams or olives, canning jars, shrimp cocktail glasses, "Oui" brand yogurt glasses, spice bottles, etc.), small bottles and small vases. Simply call Caro Stinson at 805-245-4951 or Nancy Puder is 805-448-7404 and they will pick them up at your convenience.

Image by [_Alicja_ from Pixabay](#)

We thank everyone who has dropped off vases and jars!

Lenten Challenge: LWR Personal Care Kits Packing Day, March 28

Lutheran World Relief has issued a plea for Personal Care Kits. The challenges to LWR to keep their warehouses stocked for emergencies during COVID has been great. Shortages are due to the pandemic and the increased need for sanitation due to the virus. Shortages are also because churches and groups not being able to gather together to assemble kits.



We are going to try to help by packing some Personal Care Kits for LWR on March 28. Set up will be at 9:30 am, packing to begin at 10:30 am. This will be a socially distanced event, with sanitation protocols in place for everyone's safety.

The novel coronavirus has exposed how connected we are as humanity and just how many of our problems and challenges are global and interrelated. This is a reminder during these weeks of Lent that even though the virus has stripped away our ability to touch others, God's power and ability has not been limited. We still have resources to offer others – even without being in close contact.

Through LWR's projects, your love and compassionate support will be providing hygiene kits to those in need of care around the world. This is a time when we can offer a "healing touch" that doesn't actually require us being physically close to someone else by sending the Personal Care Kits to wherever they are most needed.

Personal Care Kits contain:

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)

If you have any questions or need more info, please contact me at 688-5219.

– Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry
(Additional information used from LWR release for Lent)

Noisy Offering: Making Change Count on March 28

“If you want to touch the past, touch a rock. If you want to touch the present, touch a flower. If you want to touch the future, touch a life.” – **Author Unknown**

For our Noisy Offering this month, we will be collecting funds to help local women in need by supplying feminine hygiene supplies. (Yes, this is an awkward subject for many but totally necessary.) The Noisy Offering in March is traditionally used to assist women’s causes in some way, as March is Women’s History Month and March 8th is International Women’s Day.

Why do we need to support this?

During our weekly food distribution, we were being asked quite frequently for feminine hygiene supplies. When funds are tight, these critical items are a costly reminder that women suffer more than men during times of financial insecurity. From a Reuters article by Linda Carroll:

A survey of low-income women in a large U.S. city finds that nearly two-thirds couldn’t afford menstrual hygiene products such as tampons or pads during the previous year.

More than one in five women said they had this problem every month, researchers report in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

Instead, the women said they made do with cloth, rags, tissues, toilet paper and sometimes even diapers or paper towels taken from public bathrooms.

Nearly half the women said there were times in the past year when they could not afford to buy both food and period products.

“This is not a luxury,” said Anne Sebert Kuhlmann, an associate professor in the College for Public Health and Social Justice at St. Louis University. “It’s a need. It affects a woman’s sense of self, her sense of dignity and her ability to participate in life.”

As it turns out, period products are not covered by government grocery-assistance programs such as WIC and SNAP, Sebert Kuhlmann said. “And in (some states) they are taxed at the highest rate,” she added.

Making matters worse for many women is the cost of transportation to stores that sell these products in bulk at lower prices, Sebert Kuhlmann said.

We all “make change for the better” with the Noisy Sunday offering. So send in your coins, cash and checks into the office and make some noise on March 28. Together, we can CHANGE a woman’s world.

Even a small donation or one coin can make a difference to someone in need.

– **Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry**

Events and Occasions



Virtual Theo Pub

Theology Pub will be gathering on Zoom on March 11 at 7 pm. 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!

Lenten Zoom Supper

Even though we can't physically gather for our regular Lenten practice this year, please join us for a Lenten Zoom Supper on **March 10th, at 5:30 pm**. Bring your own simple supper so we can come together over a meal. There will be one or two questions for us to come together around and enjoy God's presence in our community. To join in, simply type this link into your internet browser at, or a little before 5:30 on March 10: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81315569574>. We will also be emailing out the link so folks can just click on it, and posting it to our social media accounts. If you have any questions about using Zoom, please reach out to Pastor Chris



Daylight Saving Time Begins

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 14 at 2:00 am. Be sure to advance your manually set clocks one hour at bedtime. Electronic phones and computers set automatically.

Lack of Availability of Easter Lilies

Due to a lack of availability of Easter lilies, we probably won't have any for people to dedicate for the Easter Services. If the situation changes we will let the congregation know.

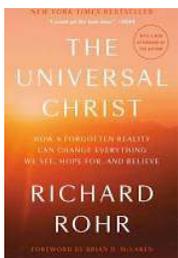
Lenten Soup Challenge

So far for my Lenten Soup Challenge, I had turkey noodle soup on Ash Wednesday, Pinto Bean Soup on the 24th and hope to have Salmon Chowder on March 3rd, Mushroom Soup on March 10th; Irish Stew on the 17th, Butternut Squash Soup or Tomato Soup on the 24th and Lent-il Soup on the 31st.

I hope you have a peaceful Lent.

Kristyl

Book Club



Bethania's Book Group will be continuing its discussion of Richard Rohr's *The Universal Christ*. If you would like to join, we'll be discussing chapters 6-10 on March 25 at 2 pm on Zoom. You can order the book through The Book Loft or online, but please consider shopping local. A Zoom link will be sent out by email and posted on social media the week of our first meeting so folks can join the discussion.

Church Business

Nyheder fra Bethania Rådet News from the Bethania Council

To be more informative and transparent, your Church Council is continuing the new process of communicating news and publishing decisions we have made via the Beacon. Our goal, each month, is to announce major decisions taken by the council to help everyone stay abreast of issues facing the church. Questions, if any, about these discussions, decisions, or messages should be addressed to a council member preferably in writing.

From the February Council meeting, we would like to report on the following topics:

- The opening for in-person worship was discussed. The council felt that re-opening might be possible in July. Much will depend on guidelines from state, local and national authorities, and the wider distribution of vaccinations. The Council will develop plans on moving forward and share with the Congregation. Re-opening will also impact food distribution and the preschool with regards to sharing space.
- Tentative date for Vacation Bible School is July 19-23, with nearly all activities taking place outdoors with social distancing and face masks required.
- Approved draft 2021 Budget, which will need to be approved by the Congregation. Discussed the congregation annual meeting to be held in late March, via Zoom. The Annual Report will be completed in mid-March and available to the congregation electronically, and mailed to those who are not able to access via internet.
- It was discovered that the church had not been contributing to Pastor's Housing Equity Allowance (as was required through his Letter Of Call) for about three years. Voted to make up the back amount (approximately \$10,000) by placing that amount in tax deferred account (IRA).
- A discussion was held about the possibility of selling the parsonage to Pastor Chris & Livier. Pastor expressed a desire to purchase the parsonage, as he and his family would like to make a commitment to stay with Bethania for the foreseeable future. This would also give them the opportunity to enter the housing market and build equity. The Council voted to explore this option and do further investigation as to how to proceed. Further details will be brought back to the Council before any other action is taken. If such a move were considered, the entire Congregation would need to vote on it.

If you have any questions or comments on any of these topics, please contact one of the council members below:

Emilly Abello (805) 688-1243	Jasmine Day day.jasmine@gmail.com	Lori McConnell (805) 331-7971
Wendy Bevier (805) 680-1521	Lynne Hemming (805) 698-9886	Ann Twigg (805) 350-3072
Josh Bratt (805) 245-0465	Carol Lake (805) 688-6797	Ron Walsh (805) 705-3736

Treasurer's Report Feb. 18, 2021

BALANCE SHEET

	Jan 2021	Dec 2020	Change	Notes
Operating Acct	68,923	79,076	-10,153	Operating cash flow
Money Mkt Acct	152,513	142,612	9,901	Money market transactions
Petty Cash Acct	100	100	0	
Fund Accounts	1,871,466	1,871,466	0	
Fixed Assets	1,844,091	1,844,091	0	
Total Assets	3,937,093	3,937,345	-252	
Current Liabilities	260,560	263,770	-3,210	Changes in designated funds
Equity	3,676,532	3,673,575	2,957	Net cash flow
Total Liab/Equity	3,937,093	3,937,345	-252	Net cash flow

PROFIT & LOSS ACTUAL VS BUDGET

January 2021	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
Total Income	27,493	32,198	-4,705	Miscellaneous receipts Offerings – Regular Envelopes Brown Bag Breakfast
Total Expenses	25,202	25,633	-431	Outside Maint Services
Other Income	1,229	0	1,229	Minor
Other Expenses	638	0	638	Minor
Net Income	2,882	6,565	-3,683	

Balance Sheet:

- The cash position remains strong with \$68,000,00+ in the checking account.
- The church has nearly \$4,000,000 in total assets. There is no long term debt, with the exception of the pension liability (\$9,942). Pension liability should be taken care of by mid March. Executive committee had a meeting to discuss how to handle this – results to be discussed under new business at council meeting.

Profit & Loss Budget Performance:

Income:

- Offerings for the month were over the budget by over \$3000.00, due to the generosity of the congregation.

Expenses:

- Salaries and other expenses are mostly under budget, with the exception of office expenses being higher in January. This was due in part to paying a yearly subscription fee to Intuit for payroll software, and higher fees paid to Pushpay due to the increase in donations.

Thank You's, Acknowledgements & Announcements

Blessings are contagious...

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does." – William James

BIG "Thank You's" to:

- Thomas Olsen of Red Viking Restaurant, for donating a year's worth of quarters from his penny-imprint machine to the Food Distribution. The amount given was \$1,104.25. Thanks also to Harriett and Gene Madsen for rolling all of those quarters!
- The Solvang Chamber of Commerce for donating a thousand disposable medical masks and one thousand KN95 respiratory protection masks for use by the church and the Preschool/After School Program.
- Fred & Nancy Emerson and Ron & Kathy Walsh, for offering to use their Thrivent Cards to help support the Personal Care Kits this month.
- Jim and Kristyl Downey for purchasing Brown Bag Breakfast supplies with their Thrivent Cards.
- Solvang Rotary, for donating \$810.00 per month through June to support the food distribution. They are donating these funds since they are meeting virtually and leftover funds from dues are being sent to help support the food distribution.
- City of Solvang, for donating \$10,000 to help fund the food distribution effort at Bethania.
- Bridget Cassara, who has been driving loads of food and donated items up to Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz.
- Elizabeth Breen, Josh Bratt, Jan Zigler, Kristyl Downey, Linda & Rick Marzullo, Denise Morris and Donna Hinsbeeck for keeping the Blessing Box stocked daily.
- Donna Hinsbeeck and Kristyl Downey, for helping shop for Tuesday Food items.
- Our many volunteers, who keep helping out with the church's work.

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.

Prayers of Joy for the family of newborn Amelia Grace Romane, daughter of Shelene Petersen (Betty & John Petersen) & Richard Romane

For Comfort for the family and loved ones of...

Chauncey Peterson who passed away in February. Chauncey was a resident of Atterdag Village.

Bob Jennings who passed away Feb. 5, 2021. Bob was on our prayer list for many months.

Annette Clausen who passed away Feb. 12, 2021. Annette Clausen daughter and step-daughter of Bent & Ingelise Pedersen.

Michael Jech who passed away Feb. 25. Michael was one of Bill Klein's grandsons and Barbara Marsh Klein's step-grandsons.

Andy Blanton, Dennis Bornhoft, Greg Braund, Kerstin Emerson, Chris Frederiksen, Sheldon & Pat Green, Shannon Hazard, Belle Hoger, Suzanne Hollrah, Jennifer Howell, Glen Jacobsen, Gladys Jorgensen, Jeanne Labarge, Betsy & Steve Logan, Ariana Macias, John Marzullo, Stewart Mee, Brian Merrick, Denise Morris, Robert & Shelly Myers, Roger Myers, Eric and Mallory Oftebro, Barbara & Charles Osborn, Marie Ostertag, Kate Pearrrson, Chèle Ludwig Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Joyce Purvis, Robin Schatan, Judy Stamat, and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.



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