



The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
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January 2022

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Pastor Chris's Message

I came across two studies recently that I found super intriguing with regard to the New Year. The first was that only 8% of people who make a New Year's resolution actually see it through. The second study is a little more in depth but has to do with the first. Let me explain. Back in 2015, a social scientist, named Brett Ford shared the results of a study she conducted with individuals from the US, Russia, Japan, and Taiwan. The focus of the study was to see if people who made the intention of becoming happier would actually succeed. She found that people who made this intention were successful of becoming happier people in Russia, Japan, and Taiwan. However, people in the US remained at the same level of happiness they were at prior to the study. How can this be? She found that people in Russia, Japan and Taiwan who set this intention, pursued the goal by trying to help others within their vicinity, whether it be family and friends. Concurrently, people in the US pursued this goal by trying to make themselves happy, through exercise, meditation, picking up a hobby, or other inward focused methods.

The second study has to do with the first in that every New Year, millions of people make resolutions with how they are going to enter the next year. While only 8% succeed, I would wager most resolutions are also inward focused, usually centered around eating better and exercising. I definitely am not trying to disparage any of these methods; having a healthy lifestyle is always a great idea. But I feel that most people who create resolutions for the New Year, do so from a place of wanting to have a happier year.

I gave up on resolutions a while ago because I am firmly in the 92% camp that doesn't see them through, but I like the idea that comes from the second study. I think we're all seeking to be happier in holistic ways, ways that enable us to take the inevitable blows of life and still feel like we're overall in a happier place. Wouldn't it be interesting if most people in our country decided they were going to seek a happier life by being more outward focused—in trying to make others feel better? I think that would be an incredible shift in our society typically navigates life.

I also share this because I think this was the focus of Jesus. Jesus perpetually pointed people outside of themselves towards others, especially the least of these. I really believe that Jesus knew the secret to life and tried to make that secret accessible to his followers, "Love one another as I have loved you.," and "There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends."

I'm not ready to start making resolutions this year, but I am wanting to set an intention for myself—to be more other focused. I definitely don't mean sacrificing one's health for others, but rather breaking away from the self as the center of our lives and sharing that focus with those around us, be they family, friends, church members, community members, etc. In whatever available, I invite you to join me.

I hope you all had a wonderful New Year and may this next year bring us closer together in the presence of God's love.

**Yours in Christ,
Pastor Chris**

Faith in Action

A Moment of Transcendence

There are times in poems, novels or movies when the narrative happens in slow-motion as if time is stopping and the moment is expanded. Gretchen Ruben in her blog "On the To-Do List: Watch for Moments of Transcendence" for Huff Post writes, "In the rush of our daily routines, it's so easy to miss moments of transcendence. In art, they are masterfully presented, with language and emphasis that set them apart like jewels. In ordinary life, they rush by. I try to remind myself to look for them every day."

In my life I have been blessed to experience some of these moments. They catch me off-guard and sometimes take my breath away. I feel the moment is like one of the last scenes in film "The Matrix" when Neo plucks the bullets out of their trails and he becomes aware of the Matrix's code-based illusions.

On Dec. 21st at Food Distribution, I had a transcendent moment. I haven't volunteered for Food Distribution since June. I also hadn't volunteered at night so I decided to see what goes on. I was given the task of wiping the grease pencil off clients' car windshield. That number tells the volunteers on the drive-up side, how many people are in the household and how many bags of food they get.

Briefly, I will summarize what happens: A car drives up and stops in front in the church where Donna Hinsbeeck takes an inventory (asking information for FoodBank) and writes on the windshield how many people are in the household. The driver drives around to the Laurel side of the church (directed by Ed Skytt) and is met by Gene Madsen who calls out what is needed. Gene, Keif Adler, Bill Zigler, Josh Bratt, 2 Diaper Heathers, and others (there are lots!) get the bags of food from the church, bags of produce, diapers if needed, and on Dec. 21 Christmas bags from Bethania and others. The car is loaded and the driver goes away. This happens non-stop for more than an hour and a half.

Linda Marzullo, Carolyn Schuit, Elizabeth Breen, David & Lisa Pedersen, Frank Moore, Allison Piligian, David Wong and others (usually Ron & Kathy Walsh as well) do the same for people who walk up to the corner of the Preschool classroom building.

During the Food Distribution on Dec. 21st, the "Decomposing Brass Quintet" played Christmas music on the Laurel side of the church. I was blessed I could hear them. When they played "Silent Night", I looked from the grass area on Laurel and looked at the volunteers inside the courtyard area. It was a well-orchestrated dance, like bees floating on the breeze, circling around flowers on a summer day even though that December night was very cold and dark. I thought that here are all these people, getting diapers, moving pallets of food, loading food, just moving around each other, not crashing into each other, not dropping items. Nobody tells them what to do: it all just happens, it all just flows. It is all one lovely ballet or dance. I almost cried at the beauty of the moment. It was certainly an exhibition of love, "God's Work, Our Hands" as the motto of the ELCA says, the embodiment of love as Pastor Chris preaches about.

It was the message of Christmas - that love came down and we get to be a part of it. We are all connected to each other by love.

**Blessed by service,
Kristyl Downey**



Next Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing: Scheduled for Jan. 30th

The next Brown Bag Breakfast packing is Jan. 30th in the Parish Hall after the worship service that day. Help a senior have a nutritious start to the day! See more photos towards the end of The Beacon.

(Brown Bag Breakfasts at the Downeys)

Noisy Offering: Making Change Count

The next “Noisy Sunday” is coming on Jan. 23rd. Noisy Offering donations received that day will be used to help our friends at Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz.

What will our donations be used towards?

Our January Noisy Sunday offerings will be used to help provide food pantry items for the members at Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz. Pastor Esteban Salazar and his wife Angie told me they have urgent need of staples for their families - Beans, Rice, Sugar, Salt, and Oil. As the winter progresses, field work will diminish and many more will be hungry.

You are making a difference in a child’s life with your quarters and dimes and dollars. You are helping to keep food on the table for the children of field workers who struggle to make ends meet. If you would like to donate items as well for delivery to Iglesia families, please drop them off in the church office or the narthex of the church. Or you may contact me to arrange a pickup or drop off. Anything helps!

We all really “make change for the better” with each Noisy Sunday. So send in your coins, cash and checks into the office and make some noise on Jan. 23. Together, we can CHANGE a family’s world, right here in our area. Even one donation or one coin can make a difference to someone in need.

– Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry

Bethania’s Angels Give Children a Happy Christmas

Thank you to all of our Christmas Angels who helped with purchasing and wrapping the gifts for our 89 Iglesia children. You made this wonderful event happen! Thanks to Lois and Don DeMeyer as well for getting a Thrivent card and shopping for the 4 Preschool/After School children selected by the Preschool Director. A total record breaking 93 recipients had a joyful Christmas thanks to the generosity of our Angels. This was our largest Christmas Angel event yet, with all of these children to shop for, and I am

so proud and grateful to say that Bethania members and friends once again stepped up to this challenge.

The members of Iglesia Luterana are primarily of indigenous Oaxacan descent; most do not speak English but may be able to get by with some Spanish, as their primary language is a native dialect. The pastor communicates in Spanish and those who speak only the indigenous dialect(s) have the Spanish translated to their language by others. This is a mission start up church currently located on the premises of Bethel Lutheran Church in Santa Maria.

Parents of our Angel children struggle during the off-season months to have enough food for their families and to afford other necessities. Christmas presents are non-existent for the majority of these children.

We worked with Pastor Esteban and his wife Angie to try to fill items from the children's "wish lists". We were "Christmas Angels" to children of both genders, ranging in age from newborns to age 17. Thanks to Gene Madsen and Don DeMeyer for driving the Valley Hardware truck to Santa Maria and helping with the unload. A special thank you to Ben Verkler of Valley Hardware for his generosity in the use of the truck again this year – please tell him thank you if you are in the hardware store so he knows how much we appreciate his help.



The presents were wrapped and delivered to the church before the Iglesia distribution to the family groups. So much excitement – fathers of children were unloading the packages and getting excited, looking for their children's gifts. One of the fathers spotted his nephew's gift and took a photo to send to his sister. Then he texted other people, who actually came as we were unloading to take a look at their children's gifts. He told us through an interpreter that neither his children nor his sister's children would have had anything for Christmas without our "generous hearts." The joy of the families and their children and the gratitude of the parents is so moving, as the only gift that most of the children will receive was from our "angels". Pastor Esteban ended up being "Santa" that night (quite

unexpectedly!) as their regular "Santa" had to go to the ER. It was also raining before the distribution – much to their chagrin – as "Santa's workshop" was going to be set up outside for COVID safety. With some juggling of logistics and Pastor's fervent prayers, the rain actually stopped as the gifts were getting handed out and all went well. Rain started up again as the last family received their Angel gifts so I told Pastor Esteban he was like a Moses of raindrops – parting the pouring rain for the passing of the gifts.



We also supported some local families whose children attend our own Bethania Preschool and After School Program with gifts. These families are our

neighbors who are struggling with their financial challenges. The children were chosen by Director Lola Gonzalez for assistance this Christmas season.

We are very happy to be able to help these four children who are attending our wonderful program based here at Bethania. In addition we helped someone close to the church and preschool with their family's needs at the last minute – a special thanks to two women of Bethania for their assistance with this last minute request.

Thank you all for your generous hearts and loving help with this project. With donated funds we were also able to purchase some staples for the Iglesia food pantry to pass out. A heartfelt thank you to all the Angels in our congregation and community who contributed in ways large and small to make this happen in 2021.

-Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry

More pictures further on in The Beacon.

Events and Occasions

Happy Anniversary!

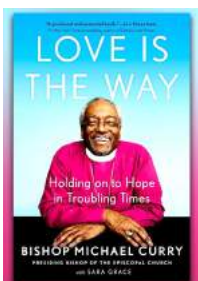
110 years ago, on Jan. 7, 1912, members of the new community of Solvang formally created the congregation, Bethania Lutheran Church. It's quite amazing to encounter a church congregation over 100 years old, but it's even more incredible to have so many people connected to the original founders. This place is more than a church—in many ways it's a family. This has been a rough two years in the history of this church, but it's also been extraordinary as members of this congregation have refused to let this pandemic stop us from experiencing and sharing God's love with our community and world. While this isn't the scenario we'd wish in which to celebrate 110 years, we can say with confidence that there are many years in the future of our congregation to continue experiencing God's love through community and service. May God continue to bless us in the years to come and may God continue to use us to bless others.

Theo Pub at Solvang Brew!

Theology Pub will be gathering once again at Solvang Brew! We'll be getting together at 7 pm on Thursday, Jan. 13th. And now that we're back at the brewery, bring your appetites! See you there!



Book Club



Bethania's Book Group is reading and discussing Love is the Way, by Bishop Michael Curry. We'll be discussing the introduction and chapters 8 & 9. The book group day is also changing to the **3rd Thursday** of the month, so we'll be gathering via Zoom on Jan. 20th, at 2 pm. A link will be emailed out and posted on social media fro people to join.

Church Business

Nyheder fra Bethania Rådet

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

- The new drapes for the Sanctuary are on order, and will be installed on Feb. 7.
- Stained glass windows need to be repaired and two companies have been contacted to work on the project – no date has been set to do the work, as we are awaiting estimates.
- A meeting regarding the food distribution will be scheduled in January.
- Discussion regarding the use of the endowment fund was held, and it was decided to hold a joint meeting with the Council and the Endowment Fund committee on Jan. 9 to review usage of the funds and discuss any changes that might be made. Once the two committees have recommended a course of action congregation members will be invited to an additional meeting to review the findings. Any recommended course of action will then be taken up at the Congregational Meeting in February.
- The proposed candidate for the Family Ministry Director position has declined the position.
- A review of the Parish Hall and Fireside Room was conducted to detect the presence of asbestos (because of the age of the building. The Parish Hall had no asbestos detected, but the Fireside room had a trace amount (less than 1%) detected. The problem is being dealt with by encapsulating the ceiling in a vinyl paint designed to prevent asbestos particles being released into the room. The project will be completed before the end of the year. (As of Jan. 4, 2021, the project has been completed.)
- We welcomed Jan Zigler as a new member of the Council, beginning Jan. 1st and thanked Lynn Hemming (who is leaving the council) for her service the past two years.
- Ron Walsh indicated he will be holding a forum on the budget for any congregation members who are interested in learning more about the finances of the church sometime in January.

Questions, if any, about these discussions, decisions, or messages should be addressed to a council member preferably in writing.

Emily Abello (805) 688-1243	Jasmine Day day.jasmine@gmail.com	Lori McConnell (805) 331-7971
Wendy Bevier (805) 680-1521	Jan Zigler (559)-740-3676	Anne Twigg (805) 350-1922
Josh Bratt (805) 245-0465	Carol Lake (805) 688-6797	Ron Walsh (805) 705-3736

Notes to Financial Statements
November 2021 Financials
Dec. 14, 2021

BALANCE SHEET

	Nov 2021	Oct 2021	Change
Operating Acct	\$55,774	\$59,098	-3324
Money Mkt Acct	118,598	122,645	-4047
Petty Cash Acct	100	100	0
Fund Accounts	2,007,563	2,007,563	0
Fixed Assets	1,852,376	1,852,376	0
Total Assets	4,034,411	4,041,782	-7371
Current Liabilities	315,182	315,182	
Equity	3,728,072	3,726,600	
Total Liab/Equity	4,048,014	4,041,782	6232

PROFIT & LOSS ACTUAL VS BUDGET

November 2021	Actual	Budget	Variance
Total Income	20,453	25,052	-4599
Total Expenses	22,515	25,232	-2717
Net Income	-2062	-179	

Balance Sheet:

The cash position is still good with \$55,000+ in checking and \$118,598 in the money market account

Profit & Loss Budget Performance:

A new category has been created to more accurately reflect the money from the Endowment committee - see 4040 on the P&L. For 2021 we anticipated that \$40,000 would be needed from the Endowment Committee. We ended up taking \$24,900 as reflected in category 4040. We have been able to do without a contribution from Endowment for the past two months.

Income:

For the year, we are under budget with regular offerings by about \$7000. For November we had a budget deficit of \$2082.

Expenses:

Expenses for the year have been well controlled. The budget was \$286,657 for the year, and we are coming in at \$20,000 less than that.

Next Social Ministry Meeting: Feb. 2 @ 6:00 pm

Anyone who is interested is invited to attend our next meeting of the Social Ministry Committee on **Wednesday, Feb. 2nd at 6:00 pm in the Fireside Room.**

Meeting Agenda items include: Food Distribution and fundraising/rummage sale, Brown Bag Breakfasts, Lent ideas, and more.

Everyone is invited to these planning meetings – we are all involved in being the hands and feet of Jesus to the world.

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

Food Distribution Review

The Food Distribution review meeting has been moved to February. Please check the bulletins and next month's Beacon for more details on the date and time. This meeting is to review the challenges and successes from previous months and talk about direction in the upcoming months. Ideas, input and questions are welcome.

We are all involved in being the hands and feet of Jesus to the world. Please plan to come and help us plan.

–Linda Marzullo
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Information from our Cemetery Committee

To our Bethania members-

For any of you who might be interested in purchasing plots in our Bethania Solvang Cemetery on Chalk Hill Rd, we would like to let you know that there are limited spaces available. We have 11 traditional cremation sites and 14 full burial sites remaining. We also have a Memory Garden option with 84 sites available where burials are ashes to dirt without a receptacle. We would like the members of our church to have the first opportunity, so please contact us for more information. In February we will open these spaces up for sale to residents of the community.

Betty Petersen 805.325.6267

Marie Jaeger 805.688.5448

Endowment Fund

In the December Beacon, we added that Donna Hinsbeeck is the chairman. She in fact is the Financial Secretary. Davin Hemming is the chairman. You may contact him (david.hemming@sPMC.com) about questions regarding the Endowment Fund.

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 during grief for the family and loved ones of ...
Arne Hansen who passed away in December

Health and Other Concerns

Carol Aides, Andy Blanton, Dennis Bornhoft, Melissa Eck, Carl and Christine Ekman, Sheldon & Pat Green, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, Jennifer Howell, Tomi Izuno, Glen Jacobsen, Betsy & Steve Logan, Ariana Macias, John Marzullo, Denise Morris, Eric and Mallory Oftebro, Barbara & Charles Osborn, Marie Ostertag, Kate Pearsson, Chèle Ludwig Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Robin Schatan, Judy Stamat, and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge a **donation to the Heritage Fund in honor of Lucille Wulff's 100th birthday and for all her years of support to the church.**

We wish to acknowledge a **donation to the Food Distribution Program in honor of Denise Morris from her Secret Prayer Pal.**

Thanks to **Joann Clark and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Elizabeth Breen and the people who responded to her Facebook post, members of Bethania and the community** we collected **125 blankets** for Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz to deliver before Christmas. We helped many children have warm place to sleep.



January Calendar Items

Sundays

9:30 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary

10:30 am Produce Table in the Breezeway & Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall

11:00 am Unorthodox Gathering in the Sanctuary

11:00 am Sunday School in the Fireside Room

Monday - Friday

9:00 am - 3:00 pm - The Church Office is open.

Mondays

8:00 pm AA in the Fireside Room

Tuesdays

9:30 am Prepare and Organize for Food Distribution

1:30 pm Arrival of Food from FoodBank in the Front Parking Lot

1:45 ish pm Food Distribution Packing in the Church, Produce Sorting & Bagging in Front of the Church

5:15 - 6:45 pm Food Distribution on the Laurel Side and Courtyard side of the Church

Wednesdays

6:00 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall

Thursdays

7-8:00 pm Boy Scouts in the Parish Hall

Thursday, Jan. 13

7:00 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company Fire Pit

Friday, Jan. 14

9 am - noon Quilting Group in the Parish Hall

Wednesday, Jan. 19

5:30 pm Bethania Preschool & After School Board Meeting in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Jan. 20

2:00 pm Book Group via Zoom

7:00 pm Council Meeting in the Fireside Room and via Zoom

Sunday, Jan. 23

Noisy Offering during the 9:30 service

Sunday, Jan. 30

10:30 am Brown Bag Breakfast Packing in the Parish Hall



Photos (by
Denise
Morris, Lisa
Pedersen

and Kristyl Downey)



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