



The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
1-805-688-4637
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January 2023

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Bethania's Mission Statement

We are a community of Christ-centered, welcoming, inclusive and multi-generational people rooted in God's faith, hope and love, called to advocate for justice, give to those in need, and share God's affirming love with the world.

Message from Pastor Chris

2009. I know, I know, I got the date wrong, we just started 2023. But 2009 is not a year that stands out in many people's minds as anything spectacular, however, I believe people studying the history of our time will recognize the year 2009 with the significance it holds. 2009 was the first year that social media became available on cell phones. Social media—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.—is so ubiquitous today that it seems innocuous. However, researchers are already looking at data that has significantly shifted since 2009, and it's quite staggering. For example, self-harm among teenage girls and suicide rates among teenagers in general have exploded since 2009. I don't think we fully understand the impact that social media has had on our society, but as time goes on and researchers continue looking, we'll see that 2009 will be one of the most substantially influential years on our world.

Social media and the advent of cellphones came on and have evolved so quickly that our society hasn't really had a chance to step back and reflect on their impact. That research is just now starting to come out and there's something we should all know about it. **The primary function of social media is to keep the user looking at it for as long as possible.** Early on, the creators of social media utilized the expertise of sociologists and psychologists to understand what would keep people engaged as long as possible and they found the best tool to do this was to intentionally put content in front of users that made them either afraid or angry of the people and world around them. It can't be overstated that this is one of the primary reasons our world has become more divisive and polarized.

Even if you aren't a user of social media, most people around you are, and social media is so ubiquitous that it is shaping society in macro ways rather than individual. All of us are exposed to its effects and how we view the world. I share all this not to create despair, but one, to highlight one of the reasons we've been experiencing this polarization all the time. To understand why something is happening is the first step in changing it. The second reason I share this is that it's the New Year—a time when we "start fresh" and we're Christians, which means we're called to look at the world through the lens of Jesus, which frankly, stands in contrast to the lens given to us by social media. I mentioned in one of my recent sermons that Jesus didn't physically change the world, he simply called his followers to look at the same world with New Eyes—eyes that viewed our self-worth through God and viewed our perspective of our world through that same lens. This perspective shift had such a powerful effect that it eventually did change the world.

By and large, I believe the combination of cellphones and social media have had a negative impact on our world, primarily because it's given people an overall negative view of the world and its people. **Jesus calls us to do the opposite.** It's New Year. A time where we start fresh, where we change our perspective, and our faith has been offering us that new perspective for 2,000 years, and today, we need it now more than ever. I invite all of us to consider our view of the world and the people around us and consider a more positive outlook. Let us see each other, not primarily through the labels the world gives us, but as beloved children of God. And let us look to the future, not with fear or anger, but with hope and promise that God will continue to redeem and restore our world and invite us to participate. I pray that we can enter this New Year with a new perspective, and I believe that perspective will have the power to change life around us for good.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Chris

Faith in Action

Bethania's Angels Break the Record!

Thank you to all of our Christmas Angels who helped with the gifts for our 95 Iglesia children and the 2 Preschool/After School children. A record breaking 97 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 to say that Bethania members and friends once again stepped up to this challenge. The number of children who enrolled in the Angel Gift program was over 700, so we did a great job helping make Christmas more fun by sharing our love.

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. They attend a start-up church located on the premises of Bethel Lutheran Church in Santa Maria. The parents of these children struggle during the off-season months to have enough food for their families and 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 the children's "wish lists". We were "Christmas Angels" to children of both genders, ranging in age from under 1 year old to age 16. The presents were wrapped and delivered to the church before their distribution on Wrap Day, Dec. 18. The joy of the children and the gratitude of their parents is overwhelming, as the only gift that most of them will get was from our "angels".

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 some children who are attending our wonderful program based here at Bethania.

Thank you all for your generous hearts and loving help with this project through your “adoption”, shopping, donations and Thrivent card use! An extra special thank you to the gift delivery team of Gene Madsen and Don De Meyer. Gene arranged to borrow the Valley Hardware delivery vehicle so that almost all of the gifts made it up to Santa Maria in one trip. Special Angels Lois and Don DeMeyer, Gene and Harriet Madsen, Donna Hinsbeeck, Denise Morris and Elizabeth Breen who helped out so much with this effort.

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 2022.

- Linda Marzullo
Social Ministry

Next Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing: Jan. 8, 2023

Our next Brown Bag Breakfast packing day is scheduled for Sunday, January 8th. We will be packing in the Parish Hall and ending by noon because of another event scheduled for that day. Everyone is invited to help out – all ages and abilities are needed to help pack!

If you are able to donate any items below, please drop it by the office or deliver on packing day. You can also make a donation and earmark it “Brown Bag Breakfasts” so we can go do the shopping. Any amount of help is much appreciated!

Items we need:

- Protein Drinks (such as Ensure or Atkins)
- Soft Granola/Cereal Bars and soft Protein Bars
- Oatmeal Packets (Protein type) or small Cereal Boxes or Cups
- Fruit Cups or Applesauce
- Pudding (non-refrigerated)
- Small Juice Boxes or Plastic Bottles of Fruit Juices (such as Apple, Cranberry, Orange)

Plan to come and make a difference to a local senior who is struggling with food insecurity. Every contribution to this project helps make life a little better for a local senior. Thank you!

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

Noisy Sunday: Making Change Count in 2023

The next “Noisy Sunday” is coming on Jan. 22nd. 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. Most needed items are: Flour, Maseca, Salt, Sugar, Vegetable Oil, small Pasta, dried Beans.

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. 22. 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.

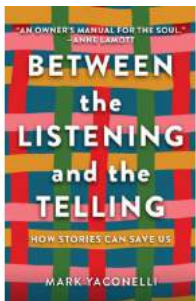
– Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry

Events and Occasions

Theo Pub

Theology Pub will be gathering at Solvang Brew! We will gather at 7 pm around the fire pit on Jan 12, and all are welcome to join. Come early to order delicious food and refreshing drinks.

Book Group



Bethania's Book Group is BACK IN PERSON! And we're reading, Between the Listening and the Telling, by Mark Yaconelli. This is a wonderful book about the power of telling stories. **We'll be gathering on Jan. 19 at 2 pm in the Parish Hall** and discussing chapters 9 & 10. For those wanting to still join via Zoom, that will also be available, and a link will be sent out.

Save the Date—Fastelavn is Back!



Mark your calendars and save the date—Bethania will be celebrating Fastelavn again on **Feb. 11 from 5:30 to 8:30pm**. All the great fun will be there again so tell your friends and family. Tickets will go on sale soon, but for now, make sure you set that date aside!

Coffee Hosts in January

Thanks to our January Coffee Hosts:

Jan. 1 & 8: The Brown Family
Jan. 15: Carol Lake & Marilyn Larsen
Jan. 22: Tom Dimmette & Rosemary Thomas
Jan. 29: Available

If you would like to host coffee on Jan. 29, please call Kristyl or sign-up on the sheet in the Parish Hall.

Church Business

Nyheder fra Bethania Rådet News from the Bethania Council Meeting - Dec. 15, 2022

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.

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

- The food distribution numbers have been going up again, to over 1,200 family members, and many new first time recipients. We also received nearly \$25,000 in donations in the last two months.
- Treasurer Leigh Berenger reported that we have had 42 new donors using Push Pay this last month.
- We welcomed Jan Simonsen, and Karin Baty, who will join the Council next month. We also thanked Emmy Abello, Wendy Bevier, and Jasmine Day for their service the past two years, as they leave the council next month.
- Bill Zigler reported that the water testing had been done, but the results were not yet available (see note below)*
- BLCW is planning a diaper shower for Drew & Eli Belle, infant twins of Maria & Christi Belle on Sunday, January 8th from 12:30 – 2:30 PM in the Fireside Room. A lunch will be served, so please RSVP to Lois DeMeyer (lbdemeyer@gmail.com) by Jan. 5th.
- The Reconciling in Christ Congregation task force will begin meeting in January.
- The council voted to show the contributions from the Endowment Fund as below the line on our financial statements starting in 2023.

- As of Jan. 1, 2023, the results of the water coming through the reverse osmosis filtration in the Parish Hall is safe to use for drinking and cooking.

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

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Jan Simonsen 805-319-8652 | Leigh Berenger (310) 877-8418 | Lori McConnell (805) 331-7971 |
| Karin Baty 612-229-8172 | 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 for September Financial Statement Period Ending 11/30/22

Balance Sheet

| | October 2022 | November 2022 | Change |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Operating Acct | \$61,746 | \$63,292 | \$1,546 |
| Money Mkt Acct | \$120,710 | \$141,101 | \$20,391 |
| Petty Cash Acct | \$100 | \$100 | \$0 |
| Fund Accounts | \$2,202,827 | \$2,202,827 | \$0 |
| Fixed Assets | \$1,878,466 | \$1,878,980 | \$514 |
| Total Assets | \$4,263,849 | \$4,285,787 | |

Profit & Loss Actual vs Budget

| November 2022 | Actual | Budget | Variance |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Total Income | \$26,971 | \$22,605 | \$4,366 |
| Total Expenses | \$25,764 | \$25,648 | -\$116 |
| Net Income | \$1,208 | -\$3,045 | |

Offerings

| | Actual | Budget | Variance |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|
| General Fund | \$18,643 | \$16,000 | \$2,643 |
| Non-Members | \$459 | \$700 | -\$241 |
| | \$19,102 | \$16,700 | \$2,402 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|--|--|
| Produce Table | \$76 | | |
| Brown Bag (grant) | \$6,320 | | |
| Food Distribution | see below | | |

* The cash position is still good with \$63,292 in checking and \$141,101 in the money market account.

* 42 Unique Donors to Push Pay in November

* \$500 donation made to Food Distribution via Push Pay in November

Profit & Loss Budget Performance:

* Offerings were \$4366 over budget for November

* All other expenses were at or below budget for the month.

*** Overall income was 93.59% of the budget.**

*** Overall expenses were at 96.84% of the budget.**

From Linda Marzullo for Food Distribution (estimate only)

| | |
|---------|--|
| Nov. 15 | \$420.00 |
| Nov. 23 | \$716.00 Wine & Beer, Empty Bowls |
| | \$255.00 Empty Bowls |
| | \$875.00 Donations |
| Nov. 28 | \$883.00 Square Gross Transactions |
| | \$4,050.00 Donations |
| | \$878.00 Interfaith |
| | \$3,458.00 Craft Sale Vendors |
| | \$757.00 Craft Sale - Kristyl Downey's Section |
| | \$175.00 Push Pay |
| Nov. 30 | \$9,000.00 Empty Bowls |
| | \$2,500.00 Montecito Bank & Trust Grant |
| | \$420.00 Common Goods Arts & Crafts Sale |
| | \$100.00 Donation |
| | \$24,487.00 |

- Leigh Berenger, Treasurer

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 Comfort During Grief -

For the family and friends of Dennis Bornhoft. Dennis died Dec. 5, 2022.

Health and Other Concerns

Carol Aides, Andy Blanton, Sheldon & Pat Green, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, Jake & Anya Knotts, Betsy Logan, Ariana Macias, John Marzullo, Stewart & Sheila Mee, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Marie Ostertag, Kate Pearsson, Tom &Carolynn Petersen, Chèle Ludwig Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Jane Shade, Robin Schatan, Judy Stamat and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.

January Calendar Items

Sundays

9:30 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary

11:00 am Unorthodox Gathering in the Sanctuary and **Sunday School** in the Fireside Room

2nd & 4th Sundays - 5-7 pm Youth Group 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, 1:45 pm, and 5:15-6:45 pm Food Distribution Shifts on the Laurel Side

Wednesdays

Chapel 11:30 am & 3:30 pm in the Sanctuary

5:30 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall

Thursdays

7-8 pm Boy Scouts in the Parish Hall

Thursday, Jan. 5

6 pm Christian Education Committee in the Fireside Room

Friday, Jan. 6

4 pm - 8 pm Woodruff Strings Recital in the Sanctuary

Saturday, Jan. 7

Set-Up Parish Hall for Brown Bag Breakfast Packing

Sunday, Jan. 8

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

12:30 pm - 2:30 pm Diaper Shower for Belle Twins in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Jan. 12

7 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company

Friday, Jan. 13

9:30 am Quilting Group in the Parish Hall

Wednesday, Jan. 18

5:30 pm Preschool Board Mtg. in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Jan. 19

2 pm Book Group in the Parish Hall and via Zoom

7 pm Council in the Fireside Room and via Zoom

Sunday, Jan. 22

Noisy Offering during the 9:30 service

5-7 pm Youth Group in the Fireside Room

Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023 - Noon Deadline for submissions to the February 2023 Beaco

Starting the New Year with Gratitude

As we start the New Year, we say “thank you” to everyone who has helped around the church year-round and during the special times:

Congregational Council, Committee Members, Staff
Preschool Board and Staff
Food Distribution Volunteers
People who Decorate the Church and Parish Hall
Altar Guild, Ushers, Readers, Assisting Ministers, Musicians, Audio-Video Techs
Sunday School Teachers and Child Care Attendants
Coffee Hosts and Coffee Makers
Prayer Squad, Secret Prayer Pals and all who hold us in prayer
Quilting Group, Lutheran World Relief Donors and Packers
Christmas Angels
Everyone who donates to Bethania - with finances, service and gifts in kind
Our members and non-members for being a part of our immediate and extended community



Image by [Oberholster Venita](#) from [Pixabay](#)

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Preschool/After School
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Happy 110th Birthday to Bethania!