



The Beacon

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

August 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

I just listened to a fascinating episode on NPR's Hidden Brain podcast about pleasure and pain, called "The Paradox of Pleasure". Psychiatrist Anne Lembke talks in the episode about a recent discovery scientists have made about the brain. We've known for a while that the pain and pleasure points are located in the same part of the brain, but scientists have recently discovered that these points of pain and pleasure compete with each other in an ongoing process of seeking homeostasis.

This might seem either meaningless or irrelevant, but she describes the evolutionary reason this exists within our brain. Imagine 2,000 years ago you're wandering around and you're hungry and you come across a date tree. After eating the dates and satisfying your hunger, the pleasure part of the brain is activated and releases dopamine, creating a pleasurable and meaningful memory. But now the dates are gone and that was the only tree. So begins the walk to find more sustenance. However, that pleasurable memory of the date has become a primary motivational factor to find more food. And the subsequent pain of becoming hungry again, of having to walk several miles looking for more food become a needed balance to the pleasure of the date tree and an additional motivational factor. This relationship between pain and pleasure in the brain has been one of the main driving forces for human ingenuity and survival for hundreds of thousands of years.

Now fast forward 2,000 years to today. We have become a society that has pleasure at its fingertips 24/7, thanks to technology. Social media and smart phones offer immediate escapes, algorithms use our own patterns to discover what we love and put it in front of us constantly, every passion or hobby imaginable has been quantified and packaged for individual consumption, regular TV has been replaced by streaming services and binge-watched television shows, news has become a 24/7 cycle, not just on TV, but online and on our phones as well. The necessary process of waiting and having to work for pleasure has been stripped away because pleasure is around us all the time, and scientists are realizing that the brain's function of balancing pleasure with pain is creating a massive dopamine-deficiency in people across the globe, young and old alike, leading to increases in anxiety, depression, irritability, and suicide.

As a pastor this fascinates me for two reasons. One, this is a ubiquitous problem, not relegated to the outliers. We're all suffering from this and it's a leading cause of the deep division, anger, and polarization we're experiencing as a society. The second reason is churches largely contribute to this problem. Knowingly or unknowingly (I think unknowingly), with a move toward offering people immediate pleasure and good feelings the moment they walk in the door, with updated worship spaces, expensive sound systems, and personalized messages of exclusive salvation, churches are

trying to flood the pleasure points of people's brains. This has become the de facto way of doing church in today's world.

My point in sharing all this is not to depress anyone because of this ubiquitous problem, but rather, to point to a solution. Scientists believe we can move past this new way of life by trying to insulate ourselves from 24/7 exposure to pleasure and move back to a slower way of life, one that incorporates *intentionality*. Bethania is not a space that offers the flashy worship services that immediately activate the pleasure points of the brain, but we are a space that activates more sustaining aspects of pleasure that people depend on: community and compassion. Each of these takes intentionality. You don't get it right when you walk in the door. You have to show up and participate, engage and connect. You can't do it from a TV screen and you can't do it from being home alone. And it's becoming increasingly difficult to do it out in the world because the world is wrapped up in being exposed to 24/7 pleasure (think of the couple at a restaurant who spend the entire time staring at their phones). Because this intentionality takes time, it allows the brain to cool off and actually feel pleasure. It creates lasting memories and has the potential to remind us of what we once had and what we truly miss: community and compassion.

This is my hope for Bethania during this next program year. I'd like us to return to the ways of community and compassion that we were so fond of prior to the pandemic and that used to be our normal ways of pleasure before smartphones and 24/7 news cycles. But again, it'll take intentionality and effort. I believe our world is craving this kind of connection again, but doesn't know how to find it, and churches that have been engaged in this way of life offer something that has become unique. So, if you're reading this article, consider showing up and participating in the community driven events we'll be having at Bethania, our worship services and coffee hour, the End-of-Summer BBQ, our Day of Service, the quilting group, the book group, the prayer group, etc. With a little intentionality you may rediscover how joyful this space truly is and we can become a beacon of hope that I think the world is soon going to be looking for.

**Yours in Christ,
Pastor Chris**

Bethania Preschool & After School

I hope you've enjoyed your summer as much as I have! The children have been enjoying water play, taking local field trips, making arts and crafts and food activities. Bethania has served over 60 families in both the Preschool and After School programs this summer and has allowed many parents in our community to continue working their full time jobs. Our last day of summer camp is on August 4 and we will be closed from Aug. 5-15 for summer break.

Bethania Preschool & After School participated in this year's 4th of July parade. A big thank you to all the parents, the children and staff and their family members who helped make this a fun and festive day. We had approximately 13 families join us for the parade. Some folks rode in the float and others joined in on decorated bikes and walked. We saw many familiar faces out in the crowds and we had a blast handing out candy and necklaces. We actually won best Audience Participation! Way to go!

The new school year begins Aug. 17 for both the Preschool and the After School program. We will have our Meet & Greet for the preschool the day prior on Aug. 16 from 9am-11am. This is a great opportunity for parents and children to come and familiarize themselves with the classroom, meet staff and other parents. I look forward to seeing all the families again soon.

We are looking to hire a teacher with ECE/ECS college units and a teacher aide for the afternoon. If you know of any qualified candidates please send them my way. Thank you.

It is with mixed feelings that we are announcing the retirement of our beloved and much-appreciated teacher, Miss Wanda. It is difficult to sum up her achievements over her 30-year dedication in fostering the growth and development of young children in our community. She will always be remembered for her profound dedication to teaching preschool children, her incredible work ethic, her contagious smile, and unconditional love for children. She will be deeply missed but we can only wish her nothing but peace, happiness, love and rest during her retirement.

In efforts to be respectful of and abide by Miss Wanda's wishes, we will be gifting her a well thought-out gift from the Preschool & After School Board. If you would like to donate towards an Amazon and a Blenders gift card, please see me. I know how much we all would like to celebrate Miss Wanda and her years here with the many children she has guided but again I am asking you to please be respectful of her wishes.

**Sincerely,
Lola Gonzalez
Director**

Faith in Action

Bethania Chancel Choir

Singers needed. If you can sing a part in tune, consider joining the Chancel Choir. The first rehearsal is Wed., Sept. 13 at 7 PM in the Parish Hall. The choir will sing at the 9:30 AM worship service on Sunday, Sept. 24. Expect a great experience. Share your gifts. Join the choir.

- Jim Skoog

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels needs substitute drivers to fill any vacancies from our regular drivers. Times would be 11:00-1:00 (approximately) on either Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.

Call or email Emily Abello if interested. abelloemily@gmail.com
805-350-3072

Noisy Sunday is Coming: Aug. 27th Help us with "Day of Service" Projects

Our next Noisy Sunday will be Aug. 27. We will be using our Noisy Offering funds towards the purchase of needed items for our "Day of Service" projects. This year we are boosting our efforts to make a difference in our community and our world by assembling Personal Care Kits, School Kits, and school supplies for local children. Remember to save the date of Sept. 10th and invite community friends to attend and support this effort!

We also ask you to consider contributing other needed items. *(See related article which includes lists of needed items.)* Collection area will be in the Parish Hall or you can drop items at the church office.

Our "Day of Service" projects will make a difference in lives here in the Santa Ynez Valley and around the world. Please consider donating items in addition to giving us some of your change. Together, we can "change" our world, one coin at a time.

Day of Service Items Needed!

Our “Day of Service” will be held on Sept. 10, an ELCA-wide vent focusing on the needs of our communities and our world. We will be collecting items this summer for assembly of Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits, School Supplies, and school supplies for local children.

Personal Care Kits help people dealing with some of life’s most difficult situations –the aftermath of earthquakes and floods, fleeing home to escape violence, and living in extreme poverty. When LWR distributes Personal Care Kits, it’s often to people who have lost everything to natural or man-made disasters.

School Kits are given to children to help them have the supplies to be able to attend school. Imagine having to choose between eating a meal or purchasing a notebook. In the places where LWR works, even a few required supplies, like pens and paper, may be more than many families can afford. And when parents can only afford to send one of their children to school, girls rarely get priority...yet the education level of mothers has the biggest impact on development.

Here are the items we are collecting. Watch for sales and help us stock up!

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 – NOT SHARPENED please!
6. Ballpoint (not gel) Pens, Black or Blue ink
7. 2-1/2” Erasers
8. Box of Crayons (16 or 24 count)

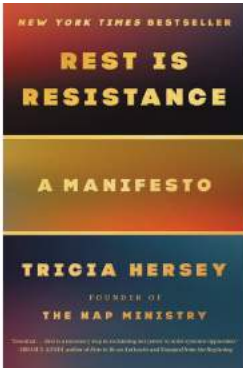
Bring your items to the donation box by the Sunday School office or to the church office.

If you have any questions, contact the church office or Linda Marzullo at work: 688-5219 or via email: vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Events and Occasions

Theo Pub on Different Week

It's Summer so we're doing Open Topic Night at Theo Pub. This is your chance to bring your own topic for the group, or, to ask Pastor Chris anything you've always wondered about the Bible, our faith, theology, Biblical history, etc! This tends to be some of the most exciting conversations as we don't know where each night's topics will go. We'll be gathering on the first week of the month in August because Pastor Chris will be out of town on Aug. 10th. This month we will gather on Aug. 3rd, at 7 pm at Solvang Brew around the fire pit. Please come and join!



Book Club

Bethania's Book Group is continuing its reading of Rest is Resistance, by Tricia Hersey. There's still time to jump in if you missed last month. We'll be discussing Part 1 of the book. We gather on Aug. 17th at 2 pm in the Parish Hall. **Please note**, we'll have a zoom link available, but the Zoom link is for those who cannot physically be present. If you're able, try to come in person, it makes the experience a lot more meaningful.

August Coffee Hosts

Thanks to our coffee hosts: Aug. 6 - Betty Petersen Aug. 13 - Marie Jaeger

We are looking for coffee hosts for Aug. 20 & Aug. 27. Please let Kristyl know:
bethanialutheranch@gmail.com or 805-688-4637.

Produce Table in August

We have been enjoying fresh produce and flowers since June. People bring their produce for the produce table and others make a donation to take something home: flowers, succulents, plums, peaches, zucchini, etc. The proceeds this summer are supporting our weekly food distribution program.

Thanks to **Elizabeth Breen** for volunteering at the Produce Table Aug. 6.

We are still looking for people to help on Aug. 13, Aug. 20 and Aug. 27.

Please let Kristyl know: bethanialutheranch@gmail.com or 805-688-4637.

End-of-Summer BBQ

Join us as we say goodbye to Summer and get ready for the start of our Program Year with our annual End-of-Summer BBQ! The BBQ will start shortly after the 9:30 service on Aug. 27th. Fun will kick off at 11AM and we'll try to have food served by 11:30. We'll have lawn games and water bounce house available so please invite your friends and family and make sure anyone who wants to go on the water bounce house **brings a swimsuit and towel**.

We'll need help in several ways:

1. Setup at 8:30 am: setting up tables, chairs, and easy-ups.
2. Grilling hot dogs and hamburgers
3. Prepping serving tables with plates, napkins, plasticware, and sides
4. Please bring a side dish to share
5. Cleanup: Taking everything down, usually around 1PM

If you can help out in any of these ways, please contact the office at (805) 688-4637, or bethanialutheranch@gmail.com

Community Networking Fair



The first Community Networking Fair was held in the Parish Hall on July 29th. This event was organized in order to try to help those who come to the food distribution improve their life circumstances in some measurable way.

We provided a delicious BBQ dinner, thanks to amazing grill-masters Donna and Rick Ineman! Presenters included: Legal Aid, WIC, Social Services, CenCal Health, Solvang Library, People Helping People, Alisal Guest Ranch, Pipefitters Union, Renters Rights

Advocacy, Buellton Community Garden and Allan Hancock College (English as a Second Language). We had a "job fair" with job listings and computer access. Bent Olsen and Olsen's Danish Village Bakery provided a delicious dessert of Danish Waffles with special topping for everyone to enjoy. Many helpers came to translate and visit with the attendees. It was a great evening, and we had more groups ask to be included for the next one. Thank you to everyone who helped out! Special thanks to Dave Wong and Barb Cox-Winters, who did the legwork on finding presenters.

- Carolyn Schuit, photos



Church Business

Nyheder fra Bethania Rådet News from the Bethania Council - July 20, 2023

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

- Social Ministry and the food distribution are sponsoring a Community Forum on July 29th. There will be a dinner followed by presentations by community groups and possible employers to inform attendees about food insecurity, job opportunities. It is open to all.
- An agreement was reached with the neighbor who was harassing our volunteers during food distribution. It was agreed upon by the council and the neighbor and his attorney.
- The council approved the new contract for our bookkeeper for the coming year. We also approved using on-line banking and on-line bill paying by the bookkeeper. All transactions will be approved by authorized signers for the church's bank accounts.
- Approved the purchase of a new microwave for the parsonage and the installation of a water line for the ice maker in the refrigerator.

The next council meeting will be held on Aug. 17th at 7 PM in the Fireside Room.

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

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

An Update on our Member Offerings

In looking at our member giving, we want to let you know that at the end of June, the offerings from our members was \$9,200 below the budget for the same period. We are also coming into the two months (July & August) where our offerings tend to be the lowest of the year. While many of us take vacations and are out of town on Sundays, remember our Church does not take a vacation from its ministries and mission, we humbly ask that you remember your regular offerings to Bethania. God bless all our members for their generosity.

Notes for May Financial Statement - Period Ending 06/30/23

Balance Sheet

	May 2023	June 2023	Change
Operating Acct	\$81,892	\$83,311	\$1,419
Money Mkt Acct	\$127,988	\$125,620	-\$2,368
Petty Cash Acct	\$100	\$100	\$0
Fund Accounts	\$1,832,408	\$1,832,408	\$0
Fixed Assets	\$1,878,465	\$1,878,465	\$0
Total Assets	\$3,920,853	\$3,919,904	

Profit & Loss Actual vs Budget

June 2023	Actual	Budget	Variance
Total Income	\$23,859	\$24,321	\$462
Total Expenses	\$26,617	\$26,407	-\$210
Net Income	-\$2,758		

Offerings

	Actual	Budget	Variance
General Fund	\$13,649	\$16,700	-\$3,051
Non-Members	\$209	\$720	-\$511
	\$13,858	\$17,420	

Produce Table	\$163
Brown Bag	\$30
Food Distribution	\$4,130* *\$3100 Stuff Sale + \$1030 donations
Hike for Hunger	n/a
Facilities Fee	\$75
Noisy Offering	\$227

* The cash position is still good with \$83,311 in checking and \$125,620 in the money market account.

* \$3000 was transferred from the Endowment Fund to the operating account

* \$6500 deposited to operating account for BPSAS Liability Insurance

Next Social Ministry Meeting – Aug. 9 @ 6 pm

The next Social Ministry meeting on **Wednesday, Aug. 9 at 6 pm in the Fireside Room**. The main topics for discussion will be:

- Discussion and recap of the Community Networking Fair, held on July 29th
- Brown Bag Breakfast packing (next one on Aug. 6)
- Review of fund raising needs, Thrivent cards
- Day of Service planning (Sept. 10)

We need committee members to help us shape the direction of our ministries! Please consider joining us on this committee. 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

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 and ours.

For the Family and Friends of Erik Pedersen - Erik passed away June 29, 2023. His burial service was held July 9, 2023 at Solvang Cemetery.

Health and Other Concerns

Carol Aides, Hayes Robert White, Andy Blanton, Fred Emerson, Sheldon & Pat Green, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, "Kira," Betsy Logan, Ariana Macias, Loretta McConnell, Stewart & Sheila Mee, Betty McCaffrey, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Erwin Ostertag, Kate Pearrson, Tom & Carolynn Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Jane Shade, Rick Shade, Robin Schatan, Judy Stamat and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.

Bethania Prayer Group

Come and join the NEW Bethania Prayer Group. Here we will gather and hold all our loved ones, friends, family members, and friends of loved ones in prayer. One of the most essential elements of our faith, prayer isn't just a petition to God, but God's petition to us to live deeper in community and to hold one another in love during moments of need. The Bethania Prayer Group will not only help us care for those among us, for those who participate, it will also draw us closer to one another. **The Bethania Prayer Group will gather twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month at 2pm in the sanctuary. We will have our first gathering on Sept. 13.** If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Chris

Did You Know?

...that in 2010, **Karin Baty** worked for the National Park Service at Muir Beach in the Marin Headlands. The project reconnected an incised creek to its floodplain. When the original creek was getting cut off from the water source, the group had to move all living creatures to the new water source. One tool was a seine net (seen in the photo).

...that Jan Zigler is making reusable period pads for our women at Food Distribution and Iglesia Women. She cuts them out and assembles them and they are amazing!

If you have something about yourself you would like to share, please let Kristyl know. (bethanialutheranch@gmail.com or (805-688-4637). We'll print some "Did You Know?"s from time to time in the Beacon. We'd be happy to print a photo as well.



August Calendar Items

Sundays

9:30 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary
Produce Table

11:00 am Unorthodox in the Sanctuary in the Fireside Room

Monday - Friday - 9 am - 3 pm - The Church Office is open.

Mondays - 7:00 pm AA in the Fireside Room

Tuesdays - 9:30 am, 1:45 pm, and 5:15-6:45 pm Food Distribution Shifts

Wednesdays - 5:30 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall

Thursdays - Noon - Lisa Blanton practices in the Sanctuary
7-8 pm Boy Scouts in the Parish Hall

Fridays - 8:30 am Jim Skoog practices in the Sanctuary

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Thursday, Aug. 3

7 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company

Sunday, Aug. 6

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

Monday, Aug. 7

Preschool and After School Program is closed from Aug. 7-Aug. 15.

7:30 am Carpet Cleaning in the Fireside Room

Wednesday, Aug. 9

6 pm Social Ministry Mtg. in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Aug. 10

Carpet Cleaning in Preschool Classrooms

5:30-6:15 pm "Four Norseman" Quartet practice in the sanctuary

6-9 pm Danish Sisterhood Mtg. in the Fireside Room

Friday, Aug. 11

9:30 am Quilting Group in the Parish Hall

Wednesday, 16

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

Thursday, Aug. 17

2 pm Book Group in the Parish Hall and via Zoom

7 pm Council in the Fireside Room and via Zoom

Saturday, Aug. 19

10 am Remembering and Celebrating the Life of Fred Emerson in the sanctuary followed by brunch in the Parish Hall.

Sunday, Aug. 20

5 pm ELCA 2024 Youth Gathering Meeting in the Fireside Room

Sunday, Aug. 27

Noisy Offering benefitting Lutheran World Relief personal care kits and school kits.

11 am End of Summer BBQ in the Parish Hall, parking lot and playground

Wednesday, Aug. 28

Noon - Beacon Deadline

