



The Beacon

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

January 2024

621 Atterdag Rd, Solvang CA 93463
email: bethanialutheranch@gmail.com

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.

Pastor Chris's Message for the New Year

Isn't New Years so arbitrary? I mean, is there really anything that different from Dec. 31 to Jan 1? It's not like a video game where you start a new level and there are clear differences. People, circumstances, and life from Dec. 31 is the same to Jan 1. And yet there's this natural reflection we undergo in that passing threshold from one year into the next. Perhaps it's because throughout the year, reflection only happens when we're intentional about it, and so this one time it compels us to consider the year we're leaving behind and the year we're stepping into.

I told myself last year (get it, haha) I was going to treat the entrance into 2024 the same way I was feeling at the departure of 2023, and yet, I simply can't help myself. I can't help but consider Bethania, especially the last 6 months, as we step into the new year and feel as though we're stepping into something different. I don't want to call it new, but maybe a better word would be "RE-newed".

At our Christmas Eve Services this year, including Little Christmas Eve, we had around 300 people physically show up, and with our online attendance it was almost 400. We haven't had Christmas Eve attendance like that since before the pandemic, and it truly felt amazing to see everyone, to celebrate the birth of our Lord together, and to be present with one another in community. It felt renewing.

As I've shared many times already, my hope for us as a church community this program year is to simply gather in joy, and Christmas Eve was joyous. But Christmas Eve wasn't a novel experience, in fact, it was the norm prior to the pandemic. And gathering as a church for the experience of joy is not a new ministry either, but one that Bethania has been centered in since its inception. It's a reflection of the community at large in Solvang, which has been present for over 100 years. As we step into the New Year and set what feel like new intentions, I think we'll find that they're probably re-newed intentions, intentions we've had or experienced in the past, but because we've grown as people, they feel new.

I find that faith, like life, is a cycle—a constant, evolving revolution of looking at and experiencing the world in divine ways and then in worldly ways. We can move from being compassionate and self-giving, to protective and closed-off, and then back into compassion. And with each cycle, it's not that we're really the same, we've evolved, we've changed, we've been shaped by past experiences, and

we cycle into a renewed space, seeking similar experiences as in our past, but with renewed eyes, as people who have grown. I love that!

We will never be the same church we were prior to the pandemic, which means we can move into similar spaces and experiences and ministries with re-newed eyes that look at these similar spaces differently. That's my hope for us as we enter this new year as Bethania. We continue to hold spaces, experiences, gatherings, ministries that we've all engaged in in the past but with a renewed sense of self through the eyes of what we've been through these last 4 years.

My prayer for us is that we can look at and experience what we do here at Bethania, with re-newed eyes and intentions. I pray we can transcend the polarization and division in society with a sense of togetherness and commitment to experiencing God in one another and in our compassionate work, that we can let go of this need to always be moving from one thing to the next, let go of our need to be guided by news and cellphones, and just be present with each other, and that we can occasionally let go of our sense of time and enjoy the moments that befall us. I look forward to this next year with all of you at Bethania and the joy that comes in such wonderful and unexpected ways! And I pray for each of you this is a year with a re-newed feeling of God's love for you and this community's love for you!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Chris Brown

Faith in Action

Bethania's Angels Make Christmas Merry!

Thank you to all of our Christmas Angels who helped with the gifts for our 90 Iglesia children. The number of children who enrolled in the Angel Gift program was over 900, 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. 19. 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".

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 DeMeyer. Gene arranged to borrow the Valley Hardware delivery vehicle again so that almost all of the gifts made it up to Santa Maria in one trip. Be sure to thank Ben Verkler if you run into him at the Valley Hardware Store!

And to Special Angels - Lois and Don DeMeyer, Gene and Harriet Madsen, Rosemary Thomas, Donna Hinsbeeck, Denise Morris and Carolyn Schuit 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 2023.

-Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry

Noisy Sunday will be Jan. 21, 2024

The next Noisy Offering will be Jan. 21, 2024. If you have a suggestion for how our change can make change happen, please contact Linda Marzullo. We are looking for ideas in 2024.

Linda Marzullo - vikingpressprint@verizon.net or 805-688-5219

Events and Occasions

Theo Pub

Theo Pub gathers Thursday, Jan.11 at 7 pm at Solvang Brew, around the fire pit and all are welcome to join. We gather the 2nd Thursday of every month to discuss a new topic with questions of faith, theology, the Bible, etc. for us to consider and talk about. No one needs an extensive knowledge of the Bible or faith, just your thoughts. Arrive early to order delicious food and a drink and meet us at the fire pit!

BLCW invites you!

Join us for quilting:

Friday, January 12

9:30-12:00, 6:00-8:00

Netalia Chernenka “ran out of everything” during the war. She didn’t have water, electricity or gas, even resorting to cooking on bricks and planting her own garden to eat. **When she received her LWR quilt, she said,** “Thank God. Thank you for not forgetting us. Thank you very much.

Bethania sent 50 quilts to Lutheran World Relief in 2023. How many will we send in 2024?

If you can tie a knot, you can make a quilt.

Questions: c/t (559) 740-3676



Bethania's First Cooking Class: Homemade Pasta & Sauces

Bethania will be hosting cooking classes to highlight various recipes of our church members that are special or just simply delicious, or a little of both. Our first cooking class will be hosted by Denise Johnson on Saturday, Jan. 13, at 3pm. She'll be teaching how to cook pasta from scratch accompanied with two different pasta sauces. And then we'll gather after cooking and eat a delicious meal together.

To keep it manageable and to ensure hands-on learning we have to limit the participants to 12 people and we'll do a first-come, first-serve basis to sign up. And there will be a \$5 charge, just to cover the cost of ingredients. You can email Pastor Chris at pastor@bethanialutheran.net to sign up to attend. After the first 12 people sign-up, we'll create a waitlist in case there are any cancellations.

Book Group

Bethania's Book Group is gathering on Jan. 18th at 2pm in the Parish Hall to finish our discussion of Richard Power's, *Bewilderment*, a novel. This has been a great book so far and it's been wonderful to venture into a novel with such meaningful content and values to discuss. We'll also be choosing a new novel to begin in February.

Congregational Business

Nyheder fra Bethania Rådet News from the Bethania Council Nyheder fra Bethania Rådet - December 2023

To be more informative and transparent, your Church Council is communicating news and publishing decisions we have made via the Beacon.

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

- Food distribution has received nearly \$60,000 in grants within the last month.
- Attendance at the Christmas Eve services were really good, with approximately 205 people at the 4:00 PM service, and 50 at the 10 PM service.
- A discussion was held regarding Iglesia. Iglesia's congregation formally voted to become an NALC congregation and have left the ELCA. Pastor Esteban ordained in the NALC. We will discuss our position at the Feb. 25th congregational meeting. Pastor Chris will put information out prior to the meeting.
- The following members of the Council were elected as officers. President- Jan Zigler; Vice-President – Rikka Rasmussen; Secretary – Carol Lake; Treasurer – Leigh Berenger; Ron Walsh will serve as the assistant treasurer in a non-council capacity.
- BLCW recently met and planned out the 2024 list of activities.

The next council meeting will be held on Jan. 18th at 7 PM in the Fireside Room.

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

Jan Simonsen (805)-319-8652	Leigh Berenger (310) 877-8418	Ingelise Pedersen (805) 688-3836
Karin Baty (612)-229-8172	Jan Zigler (559) 740-3676	Rikka Rasmussen (805) 453-8535
Josh Bratt (805) 245-0465	Carol Lake (805) 688-6797	Carol Skoog (408) 398-5673

Bethania Lutheran Church
Notes for November Financial Statement
Period Ending 11/30/23

Balance Sheet

	October 2023	November 2023	Change	Notes
Operating Acct	\$72,428	\$61,504	-\$10,924	
Money Mkt Acct	\$118,691	\$125,431	\$6,740	
Petty Cash Acct	\$100	\$100	\$0	
Fund Accounts	\$1,832,408	\$1,832,408	\$0	
Fixed Assets	\$1,878,466	\$1,878,466	\$0	
Total Assets	\$3,902,093	\$3,897,910		

Profit & Loss Actual vs Budget

November 2023	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
Total Income	\$16,944	\$20,522	-\$3,578	
Total Expenses	\$28,622	\$28,876	\$255	
Net Income	-\$11,678			

Other Donations

Bethania Heritage Fund	\$412		
Brown Bag			
Cemetery			
ELCA World Hunger	\$10		
Facilities Fee	\$1,065		
Food Distribution	\$11,438	\$2500 grant from MB&T, \$4552 Grateful Goods, \$1152 Interfaith Service	
Iglesia Food			
Lutheran World Relief			
Memorials	\$450		
Noisey Offering	\$228		
Produce Table	\$16		
Thrivent Choice \$ Fund	\$300		

If you have any questions please reach out to Leigh Berenger / Treasurer Bethania / 310-877-8418

In Our Hearts, In Our Prayers

We uplift in prayer the following people in our congregation and community.

For Prayers During Grief for the family and loved ones of...

Torben Petersen who died Dec. 3, 2023 and Andy Andersen who died Dec. 9, 2023

Health and Other Concerns

Carol Aides, Frank Amby, Andy Blanton, Dyann Driggers, Sheldon & Pat Green, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, Ariana Macias, Loretta McConnell, Stewart & Sheila Mee, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Erwin Ostertag, Kate Pearnson, Tom & Carolyn Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Renate Sanders, Jane Shade, Rick Shade, Judy Stamat, Hayes Robert White 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 in the Sanctuary

11:00 am Sunday School in the Fireside Room

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

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

5:30 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall

7 pm Choir Practice in the Parish Hall - starts Jan. 10th.

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

Thursday, Jan. 11

7 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company

Friday, Jan. 12

9:30 am - noon Quilting Group in the Parish Hall

6-8 pm Quilting Group in the Parish Hall

Saturday, Jan. 12

3 pm cooking class in the KIT, then Parish Hall

Monday, Jan. 15 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The Church Office and BPSAS are closed.

Wednesday, Jan. 17

5:30 pm BPSAS Board Meeting in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Jan. 18

2 pm Book Group in the Parish Hall and via Zoom

7 pm Council in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Jan. 25

7 pm Christian Education Mtg: in the Fireside Room

The Beacon January 2024
Bethania
621 Atterdag Rd.
Solvang CA 93463



“Be like a tree.
Stay grounded.
Connect with
your roots. Turn
over a new leaf.
Bend before
you break.
Enjoy your
unique natural
beauty. Keep
growing.” —
Joanne Raptis