



## The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church  
621 Atterdag Rd  
Solvang CA 93463

January 2025

805-688-4637  
[bethanialutheranch@gmail.com](mailto:bethanialutheranch@gmail.com)  
[www.bethanialutheran.net](http://www.bethanialutheran.net)

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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.

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### Think Red: Imagine Your Community Living and Loving Like Jesus

In his book, Think Red: Imagine Your Community Living and Loving Like Jesus, Pastor and Church Developer, Larry Stoess makes the case that churches should spend more time analyzing and living out the values of Jesus that are evident in his ministry and words. One of the values that Stoess identifies quite quickly is one I bet most of us would guess right away: Love.

Jesus, Stoess says, exhibits love in his ministry and words primarily in three areas: Love of God, Love of Friendship, and Love of the Least of These. Churches throughout society often spend time with the first two of those three areas, but neglect to be intentional with all three. Love is not some simple, benign value, but something that radically sends Jesus and his followers into solidarity and relationship with their WHOLE community, not just a portion of it. For churches that can embrace all three areas of expressing and experiencing love, they not only live into their faith more authentically, but receive from their faith rewards eternal.

Love of God is evident in how much time Jesus spends in prayer and time alone with God, who he affectionately calls abba. I imagine many of us have prayer lives with God, and I imagine like me its time spent in either intercessory prayer or with prayers of gratitude. We see Jesus emulate this in the gospels as well, but his relationship with God is also so much more. For him it is a space of spiritual rest and rejuvenation, a place to be reminded about his identity as the Son of God, a place to be reminded about his call to care for others and withstand the hardships that come from caring for others. Jesus' love of God entails a full relationship with the divine that is so central to Jesus I don't think he would have or could have stayed true to his ministry without it.

Jesus' love of God is the jumping off point for his love of friendship and love of the least of these. When we look at Jesus' cohort, it's easy to assume that Jesus had a group of friends who resembled his own demographics: Jewish, poor, and of Galilee. But when we look at the particular people he called we see tremendous diversity that should not have been able to last. We see fishermen who are taxed by Rome, a tax-collector who was not only responsible for collecting that tax, but also got rich exploiting the tax system he enforced, and a Zealot who was part of a Guerilla warfare group dead set on attacking Romans, including tax collectors. Additionally, Jesus included women who were central to his ministry in a time of deep seeded patriarchy, and members of the temple leadership who were collaborating with Rome. None of this should have worked, yet these were people Jesus deeply loved and cared for. I believe Jesus was able to see their divine identity as Children of God in each of them. In a time of rigid polarization, our friend groups tend to reflect our own characteristics, values, and ideologies, yet, the love Jesus had for his friends transcended those same issues in his day. Perhaps if we approached the people in our daily lives with the same

perception of their divine identity, our relationships would transcend the polarization of our day and show others it's actually possible.

Finally, Jesus' love of the least of these was where most of his ministry started. It's one thing to say God loves the world, it's an entirely different thing to show that God loves the world by starting with people the world has neglected. Jesus' love of the least of these is unique in that he isn't just there to save people. He sits with them, eats with them, listens to them, honors their experience, all because he is one of them. God was not incarnate in the powerful, but in a poor carpenter from the town of Nazareth. It wasn't simply about what Jesus could do for the marginalized, but also how God is experienced in relationship with the marginalized and Jesus exhibited this love very pragmatically.

What we miss about these three areas of love is that all three need to be present for the full effect. There is a balance. Love of God and love of friend alone has the capacity to turn the Church into an ordained social club that neglects the call of caring for and living in relationship with the least of these. Love of God and love of the least of these alone can neglect that we are called to live in community with one another and work through our struggles, which ultimately leads to healthier community. And love of friend and love least of these alone robs us of the space we need to rest, rejuvenate, and be reminded by the divine presence of why we are in this life in the first place.

All three of these areas are essential, yet I can say with humility, I am often neglecting one or the other. In those moments of neglect, I can feel a spiritual weariness come upon me because I'm missing out on an area that would otherwise be encouraging and life-giving. I imagine much of the Church is the same way. As we enter this New Year, my hope is that as a church we can worry less about what God is doing in the future and spend more time being present in these three areas. If any of us are feeling spiritually worn out perhaps it is because one of these areas is being neglected in our lives. My ultimate hope and prayer is that when those moments come upon us in which all three areas are clicking, we can feel the fullness of God's kingdom of heaven, and it will serve as a reminder that this life, this year, this day is a gift and a blessing, and we have the capacity to embrace it.

**In God's Love,  
Pastor Chris Brown**

## **Faith in Action**

### **Piece Makers at Bethania**

The Piece Makers are off to a great start with several quilts finished. Many, many more are waiting to be tied. We plan to meet the second Friday of every month. Here are the dates for 2025. Jan. 10, Feb. 14, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, Aug. 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, and Dec. 12.

## **Events and Occasions**

### **Theo Pub**

Theo Pub will be taking a break for the months of January and February, when it's too cold to gather. We'll resume in March.



## Book Group Has Ended

I've made the difficult decision to end the Bethania Book Group. This group has gathered for the better part of 20 years and interests have shifted to varying topics in that time. Since the pandemic, attendance has waxed and waned and ultimately the group has run its course. I'm grateful to have been a part of the group and we've read some incredibly insightful books over the years. I hope you all continue to read for both enjoyment and enlightenment. I know I will!

**Pastor Chris**

## Calling All Chili Lovers!

The Youth Group is having a Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser on **Jan. 26th** and we're looking for chili entrees! If you love to make chili, and especially if you think you have an amazing chili recipe, enter the contest and put your skills to the test! There will be prizes and trophies for the winners, plus bragging rights for the rest of the year. Plus, this is to help our Youth Group raise money for the various trips they go on, including the next Youth Gathering in 2027. More details to follow, but for now, please contact Pastor Chris if you'd like to enter the contest. We will have prizes for the following types of chili:

**Best Vegetarian**  
**Best Chili with a Kick**  
**Best Overall Chili**

Help our Youth Group and help our appetites by entering the Youth Group's first annual Chili Contest!

## Coffee Hosts in January

All the Sundays in January are available for hosting. Please sign-up on the calendar in the Parish Hall.

## Church Business Council Meeting Highlights - Dec. 16, 2024

- New council member Cheryl Heredia has been selected to fill the position of Council Secretary. She will replace Carol Lake, who completed her term.
- Robert Laufer has been nominated by Council to fill the remaining open Council position. His appointment will be voted on by the congregation in February at the Congregational Meeting.
- Feb. 23 is the date of the Annual Meeting, pt. 2.

**Jan Zigler**  
**Council President**

Jan Zigler (559) 740-3676	Rikka Rasmussen (805) 453-8535	Carol Skoog (408) 398-5673
Karin Baty (612) 229-8172	Lou Fox Bender (805)245-0553	Cheryl Heredia 714-450-5487
Donna Hinsbeeck (805)245-5907	Ingelise Pedersen (805) 688-3836	Robert Laufer 805-717-1696

# Financial Statement - Period Ending Nov. 30, 2024

## Balance Sheet

	October 2024	November 2024	Change	Notes
Operating Acct	\$137,783	\$163,844	\$26,061	
Money Mkt Acct	\$141,344	\$141,366	\$22	
Petty Cash Acct	\$26	\$26	\$0	
Fund Accounts	\$2,056,642	\$2,056,642	\$0	Cemetery, Endowment & Heritage
Fixed Assets	\$1,880,047	\$1,880,047	\$0	Property & Equipment
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$4,215,841</b>	<b>\$4,241,924</b>		

## Profit & Loss

November	Actual	Budget	Variance
Total Income	\$38,734	\$21,785	\$16,949
Total Expenses	\$29,733	\$27,545	\$2,188
Net Income	\$9,001	-\$5,760	

## Offerings

	Actual	Budget	Variance
General Fund	\$24,239	\$17,181	\$7,058
Non-Members	\$768	\$818	\$50
	\$25,007	\$17,999	

### Pass-through Accounts (Managed by BLC)

ELCA World Hunger	\$10	
Food Distribution	\$10,313	\$4251 from Grateful Goods Event
Noisy Offerings	\$470	

### Designated Fund Donations (Managed by BLC)

Memorials		
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### Designated Fund Donations (Managed Outside of BLC)

BLCW	\$100	
Endowment Fund	\$22,787	\$22,932 Bequest from the Estate of Renate Sanders was deposited to the General Fund. \$220 was paid to Synod & the remainder, \$22,712, was transferred to the Endowment Fund
Heritage Fund	\$106	

# Our Prayers

Carol Aides, Andy Blanton, Dyann Driggers, Sheldon & Pat Green, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, Ariana Macias, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Kate Pearrson, Tom &Carolynn Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Jane Shade, Rick Shade, Judy Stamat, Hayes Robert White and those who serve our country both at home and abroad

**The family and loved ones of Anabelle Dalberg.** Anabelle passed away Dec. 10, 2024.

## January Calendar

**Please note:** Bethania's Calendar is accessible on-line from our web page [bethanialutheran.net](http://bethanialutheran.net)

### Sundays

**9:30 am** Worship Service in the Sanctuary

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

### Mondays

**6-10 pm** Dungeons and Dragons Teen Group in the Parish Hall

**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** Preschool/3:30 pm After School Chapel in the Sanctuary

**5:30 pm** Yoga in the Parish Hall

**7:00 pm** Choir Practice (resumes Jan. 8) in the Parish Hall

### Thursdays

**7-8 pm** Boy Scouts in the Parish Hall

### Fridays

**8:30 am** Jim Skoog practices in the Sanctuary.

### Saturdays

**Noon** - Lisa Blanton practices in the Sanctuary

### Jan 1, 2025 - New Year's Day

The Church Office and Preschool/After School Program are closed.

### Jan. 6

**11 am** Celebration of Anabelle Dalberg's Life in the Sanctuary, followed by a lunch in the Parish Hall

**5:30 pm** Travel Documents Signing Party in the Parish Hall

### Jan. 8

**6 pm** SYV Support Group in the Fireside Room

### Friday, Jan 10

**9 am-noon** Quilting Group in the Parish Hall

### Wednesday, Jan. 15

**5:30 pm** Preschool Board Meeting: Fireside Room

### Thursday, Jan. 16

**7 pm** Council Meeting in the Fireside Room

### Sunday, Jan. 20 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The Church Office and the Preschool/ After School Program are closed.

# **Save the Date to Celebrate**

**Pastor Chris's 10 years at Bethania**

**Saturday, March 22, 2025**

5:00 pm in the Parish Hall

Come and enjoy the entertainment:

Songs Jokes Stories Tributes

**All for Pastor Chris!**

Dinner tickets \$50 Drinks \$5

Silent Auction and Raffle

Questions or offers of help contact Jan Zigler

[janzigler@outlook.com](mailto:janzigler@outlook.com)

A further recognition and presentation of a gift will  
take place after church on Sunday, April 13.

# BETHANIA SPRING CAMPOUT

April 4-6, 2025

- Tent, RV, or Day Use
- Hiking, Fishing
- Saturday Potluck
- Campfire
- Stargazing
- Soccer, Disc Golf
- Yoga
- Sunday Gathering
- Museum, Nature Center
- Birdwatching
- Canoes, Pontoons
- Games Together



Cachuma Lake County Park  
Dakota Plains Group Site

Registrar: Carol Skoog  
carolskoog@yahoo.com  
408-398-5673

Cost:  
\$80 vehicle\*/whole weekend  
\$10 vehicle/day use

\*1 vehicle = RV or car or truck or van or vehicle+trailer

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