



The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
621 Atterdag Rd
Solvang CA 93463

December 2025

805-688-4637
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www.bethanialutheran.net

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.

Past, Present, Future

In my last sermon I said Advent is about Past, Present, and Future. Advent, like Lent, is also a time that asks all of us followers of Jesus to be intentional with our faith. It is not a time to simply listen to stories from scripture and contemplate, but to reflect on these stories and allow them to be active in our faith life. For advent this year, I'd like you to navigate these next 4 weeks from this paradigm. My hope is that it will help us this season see with more clarity how Jesus is all around.

Advent is a time where we hear the stories of how people prepared for Jesus' advent into our world. However that happened 2000 years ago. At the same time we hear these stories in our present time, year after year. And we tell these stories as though Jesus is still to come. All of this is intentional. When Jesus showed up no the scene, his first message was "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Later translations would change the words to "The Kingdom of Heaven is near," placing this statement always in the future, but in reality, the statement was to draw people to both the future and the present. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; it's present, but it's not fulfilled. It was a way for people, regardless of where they were in their lives, to see how God was present, and was working through them for a better future.

Today, I think we get stuck living in the past, waiting for the future, and ignoring the present. Anger, resentment, regret, nostalgia, these are things that keep us trapped in the past rather than letting the past be a teacher. Fear, anxiety, uncertainty, these are things that keep us longing for a future that is unrealistic and unhealthy because they demand our need for control. Combined, these keep us from looking around and embracing our present moments and all the ways God is with us.

Past, present, and future, when balanced are healthy ways for any person to navigate life, and Jesus used this in his ministry. Jesus pointed people to the past, to the words of the prophets, to their reminder on how to live in loving relationship with God and neighbors, and to remember the lessons when we don't. Jesus used the words of the prophets to remind people that God is already in the future—the end of the story is taken care of. And then—and this is the big part—Jesus used past and future to help people live more fully in their present, to be active in their relationship with God and neighbor, and to be active in bringing the Kingdom about.

As we go through this Advent, let these stories of the past speak to your future, and especially your present. Let your hopes be the hopes of Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist, the shepherds, the people

from 2000 years ago. Let John's call for preparation be an active call in your life. Let the story of a powerless child born 2,000 years ago and the movement he started continue to be a story that speaks to your life today. And most importantly, this Advent, let these stories of the past and the future they envision help you see how abundantly God is in your present.

**In Christ's Advent,
Pastor Chris Brown**



**Danish Little Christmas Eve
Dec. 23, 2025
6 pm**



**Christmas Eve Services
Dec. 24, 2025
4 pm Traditional**

Image by Hans-Joachim Müller-le Plat
from Pixabay

Bethania Preschool & After School News

As we reflect on this past month, we are filled with gratitude for the joy, growth, and community shared within our preschool and after school programs. Our children and staff have been busy preparing for the holiday season, and their excitement has been a blessing to witness.

Our preschool is currently gearing up for their Christmas Concert on Dec. 5th at 6:30 pm, where the children will share songs of the season and receive a special visit from Santa. Both the preschool and after school program have also been enjoying making Christmas cards for the residents of Atterdag Village and learning about Christmas traditions from around the world.

In the weeks ahead, both programs will participate in a festive children's gift exchange, complete with singing around the Christmas tree and enjoying sweet holiday treats. The children have been embracing the spirit of the season, creating gifts, learning, celebrating, and enjoying one another's company.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support, love, and prayers as we move through this holiday season and into the new year. On behalf of our staff and children, we wish you a very happy and merry Christmas.

**With heartfelt blessings,
Monica
Director**



Poinsettias

You may purchase a poinsettia and have a dedication listed in the bulletins on Little Christmas Eve and Christmas Eve. Each poinsettia is \$20. Please fill out the form below and return it with payment to the Church Office.

Name: _____

Phone or email: _____

I would like # _____ of poinsettias.

I would like the dedication to read: _____

Payment (\$20/poinsettia) enclosed.

Piece Makers

The Piecemakers will meet Dec. 12 and then take a break until the New Year. There are many beautiful and fun quilt tops ready and waiting for us to finish. We will meet the second and fourth Fridays in 2026 except November and December. Here is the schedule for 2026.

Jan. 9 and 23
Feb. 13 and 27
March 13 and 27 (National Quilting Day March 21)
April 10 and 24
May 8 and 22
June 12 and 26
July 10 and 24
Aug. 14 and 28
Sept. 11 and 25
Oct. 9 and 23
Nov. 13
Dec. 11

Serving at Bethania and in the Community

We're Number 1 – Now What??

...and no, I am not talking about **Bethania being voted the Number 1 Non-Profit of the Year in Solvang by the Solvang Chamber of Commerce** (which is amazing in itself).

I am talking about a recent event I attended with the Veggie Rescue Board, where I learned that SB County has now become the #1 most food insecure county with the highest poverty rate in all the counties of California. WOW. So now what?

This eye-opening data underscores the continued need for Bethania to operate as a weekly food distribution. We had a huge number of households come for food the week before Thanksgiving (298 Households) and we helped over 319 households the week of Thanksgiving. We anticipate a high demand through the month of December. If you would like to contribute, you can find “Food Distribution” on the church’s website. Click the “DONATE” button and use the drop down menu to make sure it goes to “FOOD DISTRIBUTION” (under General Fund). Does even a small donation make a difference? You bet it does.

We must purchase all of the other food we distribute each week from our own funds, in addition to paying to purchase items from Food Bank. All of our purchases are made with donations given to the food distribution program and through grants we have received; no funds come from the church budget.

Donations for the Blessing Box are especially needed this holiday season as well. Our Food Distribution will be closed for two weeks because of the way the holidays fall this year, and we anticipate an even heavier use of the box than normal – which has been very heavy. Donations can be put directly in the box, left in the church or dropped at the church office, or you can contact me to drop off items.

We continue to need your prayers and support for this mission, which is making a difference in so many lives here in our area. We are working on changing “Being Number 1 in Food Insecurity”, but we need your help.

**– Linda Marzullo
Chairman, Social Ministry Committee
688-5219 (Work), 688-3059 (Home) or vikingpressprint@verizon.net**



All Jammed Up

A heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who helped us provide jam, jelly and even honey to go with the Peanut Butter that the food distribution was giving out last month. With your help, we made it and received enough jam to distribute to everyone. So many people were so excited to receive jam that it was truly a happy night. It was incredible what you all did on such short notice to help us with this idea. Thank you, thank you!

Noisy Sunday: Dec. 28, 2025 Celebrating the Birth of Jesus

The next “Noisy Sunday” is coming on Dec. 28th. Noisy Offering donations received that day will be used to purchase diapers, diaper rash cream, powdered formula and baby food. Consider this offering another way to recognize the birth of baby Jesus!

What will our donations be used towards?

Donations on Noisy Sunday will be used to purchase items to help struggling families keep their babies healthy, clean, fed and nurtured. For many of these families, finding funds to purchase diapers and formula are a struggle. Depending on which style of diaper, a good range to estimate for a monthly disposable diaper budget is between \$150-275 per month. The average monthly cost for powdered formula for babies is \$400 to \$800. Specialty formulas, such as those that contain hydrolyzed proteins, may cost even more.

We all really “make change for the better” with the Noisy Sunday! So bring your coins and make some noise to help celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus – and the birth of little miracles everywhere on Dec. 28th. Together, we can CHANGE a child’s world!

– Linda Marzullo

2025 Christmas Gifting Opportunity: Helping Our Local Families

Consider donating towards gift cards to help a local family ease the financial strain of the Christmas holiday season this year.

Our goal at the Tuesday Food Distribution is to try to give each household a \$25 gift card to help them out with expenses. You can donate towards the project or purchase your own gift cards and deliver them to the Church Office before Dec. 12th for our last distribution of the year on Dec. 16th.

We have been serving over 250 households each week, with a major bump up in numbers the past two weeks. This is Bethania’s Christmas project this year, helping our local families, instead of supporting Iglesia in Santa Maria.

The gift cards will be a big help to our families, as we will not have a food distribution the last two weeks of December due to the way the holidays fall. With less food being available at the Food Bank due to high demand, the fear of ICE, and the end of harvest season, many of our families are especially vulnerable this year.

Please make each gift card the same amount (\$25), but you can choose where you would like to help out. Here are some ideas: Albertson’s, CVS, Valley Hardware, Harrisons Hardware, Valley Fresh, El Rancho, Subway, Gas Station cards, McDonald’s, local restaurants, Walmart, Amazon...or anywhere where you think a household could use some help. Or, you can make a donation marked “Gift Cards for Food Dist.” and we will purchase the cards for you.

Email questions to Linda at vikingpressprint@verizon.net, call her work 688-5219 or contact the church office.

Next Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing: Dec. 7

Our next Brown Bag Breakfast packing day will be held on Dec. 7. Come help out at the coffee hour between services and make a difference in local seniors' lives! Even if you just have time to pack a few bags, your help makes it possible for us to meet the monthly needs of local seniors.

These bags provide food items to seniors who need to take medication with food. Many of them cannot afford this additional cost in their budgets. They also receive a few extra items so that they have snacks if needed.

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 for 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

Events and Occasions

Theo Pub



Theo Pub is back and we'll be gathering on Dec. 11 at 7 pm, at Solvang Brew. You do not need to have an extensive knowledge of the Bible or Theology, just an open heart and an appetite. Grab a drink and some food and meet us at the fire pit!



Cookies, Cocoa and Caroling!!
Sunday, Dec 14, 2:30 pm
Parish Hall

All are welcome – come and enjoy singing carols around the tree and some fabulous, tasty treats.

***** Please bring a plate of your favorite holiday cookies or bars to share!***

Coffee and Cocoa will be provided!

Coffee Time

Thanks to everyone who has signed up to serve coffee and provide treats for Sunday coffee in December:

Dec. 7 - Cheryl & Roy Donkin

Dec. 14 - Mindi Christian

Dec. 21 - Carolyn Schuit and the Social Ministry Committee

Dec. 28 - Jan Zigler

Thank you to everyone who has hosted coffee time this year.

Thank you to everyone who has thrown money into our coffee “kitty” on Sunday mornings. With that money, we are able to buy supplies like coffee, creamer, sugar and other sweeteners, coffee stirrers, and cups, etc. Thank you also to our Coffee Angel who picks up big cans of coffee when asked.

Thanks to Bob Jensen for making coffee every Sunday.

We wish our coffee volunteers - and the congregation a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Church Business

'Tis the season to be thankful!

*Thank you, God, for blessing our church community in so very many ways.

*Thank you to all who attended the Congregational Meeting on Nov. 23. We passed the 2026 budget with just two amendments and the expectation that we will end 2026 in the black.

*Thank you to Karin Baty for serving on the Congregational Council for the past three years and to Denise Johns for filling her vacancy. Thank you to Donna Hinsbeeck, who finishes two three-year terms of service on the Endowment Fund and Heritage Fund Committee this year, and to David Hemming, who is willing to come back onto the committee to begin a new term.

*Thank you to all who continue to serve on church committees. You are the reason why Bethania is a vibrant church community and the valley church that "does stuff".

*Thank you to those who have indicated their willingness to share their gifts with all of us at Bethania by submitting their Time and Talents Survey.

*Thank you to all of our church musicians, who enhance our worship experiences.

*Thank you to Kristyl for keeping us all organized and efficient.

*Thank you to Pastor Chris for showing his love for us in so many ways.

*Thanks be to God for love, blessings and opportunities, especially in this season of Christmas.

**In Christ,
Jan Zigler**

Jan Zigler, President (559) 740-3676	Rikka Rasmussen, Vice-President (805) 453-8535	Carol Skoog, Treasurer (408) 398-5673
Cheryl Heredia, Secretary (714) 450-5487	Karin Baty	Ron Walsh (805) 705-3736
Donna Hinsbeeck (805) 245-5907	Lou Fox Bender (805) 245-0553	Robert Laufer (805) 717-1696

Bethania Lutheran Church
Notes for June Financial Statement
Period Ending 10/31/25

Balance Sheet				
	September 2025	October 2025	Variance	Notes
Checking Account	\$ 47,414	\$ 31,566	\$ (15,848)	Food Dist CD \$7,190; other misc
Money Market Account	141,603	141,627	24	
CDs	145,092	152,773	7,681	
Fund Accounts	2,250,128	2,250,128	-	Cemetery, Endowment & Heritage
Accounts Receivable	-	-	-	
Fixed Assets	1,880,048	1,880,048	-	Property & Equipment
Total Assets	\$ 4,464,284	\$ 4,456,142	\$ (8,142)	

Profit & Loss				
October	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
Total Income	\$ 23,465	\$ 29,204	\$ (5,739)	
Total Expenses	35,328	30,404	4,924	
Net Income	\$ (11,863)	\$ (1,200)	\$ (10,663)	

Offerings				
October	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
General Fund	\$ 18,088	\$ 22,083	\$ (3,995)	
Non-Members	705	1,375	(670)	
Total Offerings	\$ 18,793	\$ 23,458	\$ (4,665)	

Donations - Designated Funds and Pass-Through Accounts				
Pass-Through Accounts (Managed by BLC)				
ELCA World Hunger	\$10			
Food Distribution	\$4,060	\$3,662 from individual donors, CD interest \$398 (October)		
Brown Bag Breakfast	\$35	CD interest (October)		
Noisy Offerings	\$520			
Produce Table (June - Nov)	\$259			
Youth Fund	\$2,195	Halloween party (\$2,167) + CD interest \$28 (October)		
Designated Funds (Managed by BLC)				
Farstrup Mortensen	\$32	CD interest (October)		
Designated Funds (Managed Outside of BLC)				
Endowment Fund	\$50			
Heritage Fund	\$310			

Questions? Call Carol Skoog, Treasurer, (408) 398-5673

Our Prayers

Carol Aides, Andy Blanton, Sheldon & Pat Green, John Groh, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, Ariana Macias, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Kate Pearson, 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

December Calendar

<u>Sundays</u>	9:30 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary Sunday School 9:30 am (Rm 1) & 11:00 am (Fireside Room) 11:00 am Unorthodox in the Sanctuary 5-7 pm Youth Group in the Fireside Room (twice monthly)
<u>Mondays</u>	5:30 - 7 pm Dungeons and Dragons Teen Group in the Parish Hall 7 pm AA in the Fireside Room
<u>Tuesdays</u>	9:30 am, 1:45 pm, and 5:15-6:45 pm Food Distribution Shifts
<u>Wednesdays</u>	9 am - 10:30 am Praise Band Practice in the Sanctuary 11:30 am Preschool Chapel in the Sanctuary 2:30 pm School Age Chapel in the Sanctuary 5:30 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall 7 pm Choir Practice in the Parish Hall
<u>Thursdays</u>	5:15-6:15 pm Contemplative Prayer in the Sanctuary 7-8 pm Boy Scouts in the Parish Hall
<u>Fridays</u>	9 am Jim Skoog practices in the Sanctuary Noon - Lisa Blanton practices in the Sanctuary
<u>Wednesday, Dec. 3</u>	9 am - 12 noon Bethania Preschool Christmas Program Practice in the Parish Hall
<u>Thursday, Dec. 4</u>	9 am - 12 noon Bethania Preschool Christmas Program Practice in the Parish Hall
<u>Friday, Dec. 5</u>	9 am - 12 noon Bethania Preschool Christmas Program Practice in the Parish Hall 5:00 pm 9:00 pm Bethania Preschool Christmas Program in the Parish Hall
<u>Saturday, Dec. 6</u>	2 pm - 6 pm Violin Recital in the Sanctuary
<u>Sunday, Dec. 7</u>	7 am - 1 pm Elverhoj Danish Sandwich Making in the Kitchen 10:45 am - 1:30 pm Brown Bag Breakfast Packing in the Parish Hall

Wednesday, Dec. 10

10:30 am Fresno Mini Tour in the Sanctuary
6-8 pm Youth Connect in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Dec. 11

7 - 8:30 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Co.

Friday, Dec. 12

9 am Piece Makers in the Parish Hall
5pm - 10 pm Private Event in the PH, FR & KIT

Saturday, Dec. 13

9 am - 12 noon Jaeger Family in the Kitchen
2 pm - 6:00 pm SIMH Piano Recital

Sunday, Dec. 14

1:30 pm - 5:30 pm SIMH Guitar Recital
2:30 - 5:30 pm Cocoa and Carols in the Parish Hall

Monday, Dec. 15

8:30-11:30 am Piano Tuning in the Sanctuary

Wednesday, Dec. 17

5:30 pm Preschool Board Meeting in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Dec. 18

6 pm Council Meeting

Monday, Dec. 22, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026

Bethania Preschool & After School is closed.

Tuesday, Dec. 23

There will not be Food Distribution on Dec. 23.

6 pm Little Christmas Eve Danish Service in the Sanctuary

Wednesday, Dec. 24

4 pm Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary
10 pm Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary

Sunday, Dec. 28

Noisy Offering during the 9:30 Service

The Beacon - December 2025

Bethania

621 Atterdag Rd.

Solvang CA 93463



Dec. 23 - Little Christmas Eve

6 pm Danish Service

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve

4 pm Traditional Service

10 pm Candlelight Service