



The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
621 Atterdag Rd
Solvang CA 93463

January 2026

805-688-4637
bethanialutheranch@gmail.com
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.

A Few Questions

I want to ask you a few questions and I want you to really think about your answers. I would even recommend writing them down to hold on to. Here we go: If you knew you had only 1 week left to live, and you have the same physical abilities you have right now, how would you spend that week? And be specific—what would you do with that time. What relationships would you focus on? During that time would you feel more equipped to forgive or let go of resentments towards others? What things around you would take on richer meaning, perhaps like a sunset or the sound of a random sparrow? What activities would you spend your time engaged in? Again, I really want you to think about these questions and come up with explicit answers. I want you to take a moment and even meditate on the answers; let them become a part of your identity that you can come back to while you're reading this.

I've been using these questions lately in both pastoral care with some folks as well as our Unorthodox Gathering. I think the answers to these questions are deeply revealing. My guess is the vast majority of answers would contain connection to people, would be absent of anger, retaliation, and worrying about things that don't directly affect our lives, AND would be abundantly accessible and inexpensive. For me, I would want to sit at a dinner table with friends with home-cooked dishes, conversation and laughter, and little concern for when it needed to end. I would want to be immersed in creation around me, the sights, the scents, the sounds, and just be present. I would want to spend that time with people that enrich my soul and I think I would spend very little time thinking of those who don't. I feel like I would almost immediately shed off any resentments I have towards any individuals or groups of people. I would feel intimately connected to the human experiences of strangers from so many different walks. All of this would cost very little, except of my time, which would then be very precious. Praise, adoration, and gratitude would be my primary emotions. I'm sure some regret would be mixed in there. I think I would fall in love with life around me.

You may know where I'm going with this, but it's absolutely central to our faith because it has to do with how we experience heaven on earth. The things we would choose to do in our last moments are things we can choose to do now. There's nothing stopping us from the connections to people we'd want to experience, the conversations we'd hope to have, the praise and adoration towards God and God's creation that is all around us, the ways we would choose to treat people and

the sudden lack of importance we could give to those who our anger and frustration stews against. If we lived this week as though it might be our last, our faith would be so present, active, and revealing. The ways in which God always speaks to us would suddenly become so profound.

As we enter this New Year, a time of resolutions and intentionality, I'd like to offer the above questions as a point of reflection. What I love about the answers I've heard from others is their simplicity. It's not so much taking on, as much as shedding off. It's letting go of ways of being that we would so quickly choose to give up if we thought we were in our final moments. And at the center of it all, would be God. It would be in these simple, accessible, and abundant actions and experiences that we would encounter God the most. I hope you write your answers down and keep them somewhere you can come back to. This life is beautiful and full of meaningful people and experiences, so abundant, the only thing standing in our way of them is ourselves. I pray you all have a nice and safe New Year, and I hope as we go through 2026, we continue to find God in the simple spaces, in each other, and in love.

**Through Christ,
Pastor Chris Brown**

Bethania Preschool & After School News

We are happy to share that our 2026 school year is off to a wonderful start. The children are settling back into the swing of things and are excited to be reunited with their friends and teachers. Our days are filled with joy as the children explore, learn, and return to familiar routines that help them feel confident and secure.

As we continue into the school year, we are beginning to plan our second largest fundraiser of the year, the SYV Touch-A-Truck event. If you are interested in participating, helping hand out flyers, purchasing tickets, or making a donation, we would love to hear from you. Your support plays an important role in the success of this event and our program.

We would also like to warmly invite you to our Open House on Friday, Feb. 6th. This will be a special opportunity to see what the children are learning, meet our dedicated staff, and experience the heart of our school community.

Thank you for your endless prayers and continued support. It is truly appreciated, and we are grateful to be part of such a loving and supportive church family.

With Gratitude,

**Monica
Director,
Bethania Preschool & After School**

Piecemakers



Bethania Lutheran Church women started 2026 with a Baby Shower for Jesus. Following the wise men's generosity of giving gifts we asked for donations of diapers and formula to supply families at our food distribution program. Denise Morris won the prize for guessing how many clothes pins were in the jar. The correct number was 184.



The Piecemakers received a thank you letter from Lutheran World Relief for the \$200 donated toward the cost of shipping quilts. We gave 54 quilts to Lutheran World Relief and Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a local organization that builds beds for children who do not have one.



Piecemakers are ready to kick off 2026 with two opportunities to make quilts in January. **Fridays, Jan. 9 and 23.** We meet from 9-12. Feel free to come when you can and leave when you need to.

-Lois De Meyer

And, from **Linda Marzullo**... Thank you to all who brought items to the Baby Shower! Our Food Distribution clients will be so grateful for all the diapers, formula and bottles. What a nice way to start our new year!

Noisy Sunday: Helping the Helpers

The next **"Noisy Sunday"** is coming on **Jan. 25th.** Noisy Offering donations received that day will help support Doctors without Borders.

What will our donations be used towards?

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is on the ground in over 75 countries —providing urgently needed humanitarian aid in moments of crisis and conflict. Donations to Doctors Without Borders (MSF) helps them respond quickly to emergencies in places like Ukraine, Haiti, Yemen, and beyond.

Right now, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) teams are still responding to crises in Gaza as well as other countries. Teams are delivering babies, performing critical surgeries for war-wounded patients, treating disease outbreaks through vaccination campaigns, and supporting people's mental health. For MSF, the ability to respond quickly to medical humanitarian emergencies is crucial to saving more lives.

As humanitarian needs escalate across the globe, your donation can make a real difference—helping deliver emergency medical care, surgical assistance, and much more.

We all really “make change for the better” with each Noisy Sunday. So send in your coins, cash and checks and make some noise on **Jan. 25th**. Together, we can show some love to those who desperately need medical help around the world.

– **Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry**

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

Next Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing: Sunday, Feb. 1

We will pack Brown Bag Breakfasts on **Sunday, Feb. 1**. If you would like to donate items, you can drop them off in the Church Office or we can make arrangements to pick them up.

- 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 Hiatus



Theo Pub will be taking off the months of January and February as it gets cold and wet and attendance drops.

We'll gather again in March.

Coffee Time

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

Jan. 4 - BLCW

Jan. 11 - David & Lisa Pedersen

Jan. 18 - Ann Twigg

Jan. 25 - Kathy & Ron Walsh

Youth Group Chili Cook-Off

Join the Youth Group for their 2nd annual Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser, on Feb. 1, from 5:30-8:30 pm. Tickets are \$15/person and include a sample of every chili, voting on your favorites, and a bowl of a chili of your choice accompanied with all the fixins! There will be complimentary non-alcoholic drinks and beer and wine for sale.

We also need chili entries! If you would like to enter a chili, please contact Pastor Chris and let him know what kind of chili it'll be. There will be prizes for Best Chili with a Kick, Best Vegetarian Chili, and Best Overall Chili. All chili entries get a free ticket.

To purchase tickets, either go to the church website, www.bethanialutheran.net, and purchase them from the homepage, or bring cash or a check to the office. All proceeds go to the Youth Group so please share far and wide and come support our kids!





Solvang Chamber of Commerce Award

Bethania is the recipient of the Solvang Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit of the Year Award. Pastor Chris Brown accepted the award at a reception in December at the Alisal Guest Ranch. Congratulations one and all! Thanks to Livier Brown for the photo.

Church Business

Hello All,

Well, the Danes just finished dancing around the Christmas tree to Nu Har Vi Jul Igen, our most well-known Christmas song. Did you know that it is actually a lesson about the church year? "Now it's Christmas again, and Christmas lasts til Easter. No, that isn't right because in between comes Lent." And so the church year rolls on (faster and faster, it seems).

Here's some of what you can expect to see at Bethania in between Christmas and Easter:

- A repair to the Fireside Room roof. Thank you to Rick Payne at Coastal Valleys Roofing for getting a tarp over the roof during the storms over the holidays.
- New audio equipment for the 9:30 worship band, which will improve the balance of the instruments and voices.
- New and increased security camera coverage around the church campus and the preschool.

If you haven't filled out your Time and Talents Survey yet, please do so. It will take you less than five minutes!

**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 | Denise Johns (661) 713-1516 | 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 November Financial Statement
Period Ending 11/30/25

| Balance Sheet | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| | October 2025 | November 2025 | Variance | Notes |
| Checking Account | \$ 31,566 | \$ 41,350 | \$ 9,784 | |
| Money Market Account | 141,627 | 141,649 | 22 | |
| CDs | 152,773 | 153,283 | 510 | |
| Fund Accounts | 2,250,128 | 2,250,128 | - | Cemetery, Endowment & Heritage |
| Accounts Receivable | - | (146) | (146) | |
| Fixed Assets | 1,880,048 | 1,880,048 | - | Property & Equipment |
| Total Assets | \$ 4,456,142 | \$ 4,466,312 | \$ 10,170 | |

| Profit & Loss | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| November | Actual | Budget | Variance | Notes |
| Total Income | \$ 30,048 | \$ 29,204 | \$ 844 | |
| Total Expenses | 30,089 | 30,404 | (315) | |
| Net Income | \$ (41) | \$ (1,200) | \$ 1,159 | |

| Offerings | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| November | Actual | Budget | Variance | Notes |
| General Fund | \$ 24,694 | \$ 22,083 | \$ 2,611 | |
| Non-Members | 811 | 1,375 | (564) | |
| Total Offerings | \$ 25,505 | \$ 23,458 | \$ 2,047 | |

| Donations - Designated Funds and Pass-Through Accounts | | |
|---|----------|---|
| Pass-Through Accounts (Managed by BLC) | | |
| ELCA World Hunger | \$20 | |
| Food Distribution | \$24,812 | Missions & Ministry Grant \$10,000, Individual donations \$5,125, Grateful Goods \$4,604, MBT Community Dividends Grant \$2,500, Interfaith Service \$1,583, SYV Jewish Community \$1,000 |
| Noisy Offerings | \$467 | |
| Produce Table (June - Nov) | \$76 | |
| Youth Fund | \$20 | |
| Preschool/Child Care Gifts | \$45 | |
| Designated Funds (Managed by BLC) | | |
| Memorials | \$500 | |
| Designated Funds (Managed Outside of BLC) | | |
| BLCW | \$20 | |
| Endowment Fund | \$2,550 | |
| Heritage Fund | \$139 | |

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

A Welcome Christmas Gift to Our Households!

Thanks to the generosity of our members, friends and a grant, we were able to provide 208 \$25.00 gift cards to the Tuesday Food Distribution clients as their additional Christmas gift. This was especially welcome for so many families because we were closed for 2 weeks at Christmastime due to the way the holidays fell. This little gift of \$25 for food, gas, items at hardware stores and other places, was much appreciated by all. It was also fun for the families to be able to choose which gift card they would prefer – so much sparkle in those happy eyes! Thank you, thank you for sharing your love with people in need this past Christmas.

– Linda Marzullo

Our Prayers

Carol Aides, Andy Blanton, Sheldon & Pat Green, John Groh, Barbie Haile, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, Ariana Macias, Anneli & Larry Merich, Robby Meinehrt, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Kate Pearrison, 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

January Calendar

- Sundays** **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)
- Mondays** **5:30 - 7 pm** Dungeons and Dragons Teen Group in the Parish Hall
7 pm AA in the Fireside Room
- Tuesdays** **9:30 am, 1:45 pm, and 5:15-6:45 pm** Food Distribution Shifts
- Wednesdays** **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
- Thursdays** **5:15-6:15 pm** Contemplative Prayer in the Sanctuary
7-8 pm Boy Scouts in the Parish Hall
- Fridays** **9 am** Jim Skoog practices in the Sanctuary
Noon - Lisa Blanton practices in the Sanctuary

Continued on next page ==>

Sunday, Jan. 4

10:30 am BLCW Baby Shower for Jesus in the Parish Hall

Thursday, Jan. 8

5:15 - 6:45 pm Irish Dance in the Parish Hall

6 pm Trip Document Signing in the Fireside Room

Friday, Jan. 9

9 am Piece Makers in the Parish Hall

Thursday, Jan. 15

5:15 - 6:45 pm Irish Dance in the Parish Hall

6 pm Church Council Meeting in the Fireside Room

Saturday, Jan. 17

7 am-9 pm Private Event in the Parish Hall

Monday, Jan. 19

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Menu Sampling in the Kitchen

Wednesday, Jan 21

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

Thursday, Jan. 22

5:15 - 6:45 pm Irish Dance in the Parish Hall

5:30-7 pm Touch-A-Truck Planning Meeting in the Fireside Room

Friday, Jan. 23

9 am Piece Makers in the Parish Hall

Sunday, Jan. 25

Noisy Offering during the 9:30 service

Thursday, Jan. 29

5:15 - 6:45 pm Irish Dance in the Parish Hall

Saturday, Jan. 31

All Day Event in the Parish Hall, Kitchen and Fireside Room

The Beacon - January 2026

Bethania

621 Atterdag Rd.

Solvang CA 93463

