



The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
621 Atterdag Rd
Solvang CA 93463

March 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.

Thoughts from Pastor Chris Brown

When I was in seminary in my Pastoral Care class, we had to read a book called Images of Pastoral Care, and the idea was that we would assume various roles any time we were engaged in caring for others pastorally. The book used images like "the wounded healer", "the circus clown", "the wise fool", etc. It was framed for us getting ready to be pastors, but I've found anyone who provides pastoral or Christian care to others can assume various images of their own.

As I've grown in my own ministry, I've thought a lot about, not just what image I assume, but an image that I think many Christians are called to. The image comes from a young adult book I had to read in middle school called The Giver, by Lois Lowry, and the image is thusly called "The Giver".

It's a book about a society that has eradicated suffering and created a type of utopia. There's no poverty, violence, hunger, or pain. Everyone has enough and they're comfortable with enough because primarily "desire" has been eradicated. Everyone has a job given to them at the age of 12, their spouses are chosen for them, the children they raise are provided to them, and no one suffers want. Flavors of food are muted, color is restricted to shades of grey, and all this is to prevent desire and comparison so no one seeks beyond their role. However, there's one person in the whole society who is designated to hold onto everything that has been stripped from the people, and he is The Giver.

The story follows a young boy named Jonas who is prepared to receive the job he will have for his career, but during the ceremony his name is not called. He then finds out that he will become the next Giver, a role he's never even heard of. When Jonas meets The Giver, he finds out what is being asked of him. He will hold on to the memories of what existed before his society. He will be able to perceive life without any inhibitions. Flavor and color will be restored to him. He will hold on to more beauty than anyone can imagine; but it comes at a price—he also must hold onto the pain, for you cannot have light without dark. The story continues with the ultimate question: Will Jonas be able to tolerate the balance life asks of him? He must discover if he's able to experience such awe and beauty in the world, but also tragedy and pain, because ultimately, the two areas accentuate each other. I loved the book as a teenager and have grown even more fond of it as an adult. I recommend it to anyone.

I find in it a deep sense of our own humanity and faith. Christ does not remove us from pain and sorrow. In fact, to walk the path of Christ is to accompany pain and sorrow, it is to place ourselves, as Jesus did, among those at their lowest, to remind them God is there with them. Just as The Giver was a special role only one person could have, I have found that few people are able to walk this path of intentionally stepping into the pain of the world as God's hands and feet. It feels like too much to bear.

But if we can, we discover that light exists in that darkness, and it is so beautiful to behold. To see the resilience of the human spirit amidst anguish, to see the stubbornness of love among the perpetuating rhythms of anger and hate, to discover human worth amidst human suffering is to see how strong and vibrant life is, how much goodness is weaved into the fabric by God and to know that the light is in this world and darkness does not overcome it. It is strength and resilience to continue choosing what's right, and while there is pain and sorrow involved, there is also tremendous beauty, more beauty than we've ever beheld—if we can just bear it.

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

New Church Directory!

It's been 6 years since we've done a church directory and during that time life is changed in many ways. People have passed on, people have moved, and a ton of people have joined our church. We wish to reflect these changes in A NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY. Council has voted to contract with an online company called "Instant Church Directory".

This will be a directory that can be accessed online, or by an app you can download on your phone. Because it will be digital, anytime a person or family joins the church we can take their picture and add them to the directory, so we won't have to do a new directory again. However, because we're just starting this, we really, really need your help!

Here's how you can help us be part of the directory:

1. Come to church this Sunday, March 1. We'll have church members, Becky Sutherland, Steve Brown, and Robert Laufer taking pictures of people in front of the church for the directory. We'll also be collecting some information for the directory. We'll also be taking photos for a few Sundays, so if you cannot make it this Sunday, there will be other chances.
2. You can also submit your own photo for the directory, and yes, in can include your pets. It just has to be a photo that shows your faces (no sunglasses please), and one you're happy with. If you want to submit a photo instead of having your picture taken, PLEASE LET US KNOW.
3. Council had to vote on parameters for the directory, and we voted to limit to people who are officially members of Bethania. This is for safety and efficiency of who can see the directory. If you're not officially a member, or are unsure of your membership, and want to become a member, please reach out and let us know.
4. After an initial campaign of adding to the directory, I will personally be reaching out to people to encourage them to do this. It's really important that our church is reflected in this. Even if you do not attend service regularly, if you consider Bethania your church home, we want you to be in the directory.

HOW IT WORKS:

1. Whether you have your photo taken or submit a photo, afterwards, you will receive a link that will enable you to login to the Bethania Directory. You'll create your own way to login, and you'll be able to access from your phone or from a desktop with the Instant Church Directory website or app.
2. Only emails that have been confirmed and approved by the church office will be able to login. This will prevent spam or outside people from being able to access our church directory.
3. If you are not online or don't have a smartphone, we'll be able to print PDFs of the directory after it's complete, so do not fret, your directory is coming!

QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions, you can contact Pastor Chris or Becky Sutherland. Becky can be reached at rsutherland221@gmail.com

It's been too long since we've had an updated directory, and we've had so many wonderful people join and already wonderful community and we want to be able to see our church members, so PLEASE don't ignore this, and plan and participate.

Bethania Preschool & After School News

As we welcome the beauty of the spring season, our hearts are full of joy and gratitude. The children are already delighting in the warmer weather, blooming surroundings, and the sense of new life that spring brings. We would also like to extend a very special and heartfelt thank you to the Endowment Fund for helping make our new fence possible. We are forever grateful for this wonderful addition to our campus. In the sweet words of the children, "Wow, our school looks beautiful!" a reminder of how meaningful your generosity truly is.

Our classrooms are filled with curiosity and discovery. Miss Nicole's class is learning all about insects and springtime plants, observing how nature comes alive this season. Miss Leslie's class is exploring all things weather, asking thoughtful questions and learning how God's creation changes from day to day. Miss Christina's class is studying the life cycle of a plant, watching growth unfold before their eyes, while Miss Rowena's class is joyfully setting their clever traps in hopes of catching a mischievous leprechaun!

Our after school program has embraced the role of young scientists. Students are experimenting with changing the colors of flowers using food coloring, learning about weather through simple chemical reactions, and creating mouthwatering food crafts that spark both creativity and collaboration. Beyond academics, we are especially thankful for the deep relationships being built each day friendships, faith, confidence, and a love for learning that continues to grow. It is a blessing to watch each child develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, and academically in such a nurturing environment.

As we look ahead to the coming months, we are excited for warmer days, hands-on learning, meaningful connections, and endless laughter on the playground. We are also looking forward to our Touch-A-Truck event May 2nd and hope to see many of you there as we gather in fellowship and community.

Thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and unwavering support. Your kindness allows us to create a safe, joyful, and faith-filled space where children can learn, grow, and thrive. We are truly blessed to partner with such a loving church family.

**With Gratitude,
Monica Dunn, Director**

Lenten Soup Suppers & Storytelling

Every Wednesday in Lent through March 25, we'll gather for Lenten Soup Suppers and Storytelling. We'll be changing the time a little bit and this year we'll be gathering at 5:30pm in the Parish Hall to enjoy homemade soup, salad, and bread, followed by stories from our own community members. The theme this year will be "Unexpected Kindness". I ask everyone to think of a moment of kindness that you really needed at a moment in your life and share your story. If you'd be willing to be a storyteller this year, please let Pastor Chris know.

We also need help with soup, salad, and bread. Look out for a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall, and let's get the sign-up sheet filled up as quickly as possible!

"Lord, When Did We See You?" - A Bethania Lenten Practice

For Lent this year, Bethania is going to participate in a churchwide campaign by the ELCA called "Lord, When Did We See You?" The idea is to center ourselves this Lent on Matthew 25, in which Jesus calls his followers to see him in the least of these. Each week in Lent is going to focus on one of the ways Jesus talks about.

- **Week 1**, February 22: Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food?
- **Week 2**, March 1: Lord, when was it that we saw you thirsty and gave you something to drink?
- **Week 3**, March 8: Lord, when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you?
- **Week 4**, March 15: Lord, when was it that we saw you naked and gave you clothing?
- **Week 5**, March 22: Lord, when was it that we saw you sick and visited you?
- **Week 6**, March 29: Lord, when was it that we saw you in prison and visited you?

At each worship service we'll read the excerpt for the week and offer a short reflection, accompanied by an action we can all take to see Jesus in these particular areas this Lent. Our hope is that this Lenten season will be seeing Christ present in this world and meeting Him in unexpected ways.

Coffee Time

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

March 1 - Available

March 8 - Available

March 15 - Emmy Abello & Ilse Popma

March 22 - Available

March 29 Palm Sunday - Available

Anna Cook will be storytelling on March 29. Anna's subject will be grief counseling.



Sleep in Heavenly Peace

**“No child sleeps on the ground
in our town.”**

Colleen Grant, leader of the North Santa Barbara county chapter of this national organization will be at Bethania on Sunday, March 8, at 12:00 noon. She will tell us about her organization, including:

- Who donates wood and other materials
- How you can participate in a bed build
- How children are selected to receive beds

Bethania's Piece Makers quilters will present her with quilts for SHP.

RSVP to Lois De Meyer (805-686-0091) or Jan Zigler (559-740-3676)



Theo Pub is Back!

Theo Pub is back now that it's warmer out and we'll be gathering on Thursday, March 12 at Solvang Brew at 7pm. Come a little early and grab a drink and some food and meet us by the fire pit! The topic this month is "Faith or Belief".

Piecemakers

The Piecemakers have been busy focusing on quilts for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. We have many quilts ready to send with Colleen Grant when she comes to tell us about the program March 8. We will continue to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief as well. March is National Quilting Month and we have two opportunities for everyone to help, March 13 and 27.

The next bed build for "Sleep in Heavenly Peace" is Saturday, March 21 in Lompoc. I would love to see a team from Bethania participate. I have helped with two builds and it is a very rewarding experience.

Please RSVP for lunch (March 8) to me at lbdemeyer@gmail.com.

- Lois De Meyer



Photo from Lois De Meyer

Next Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing: Sunday, March 22

Our next Brown Bag Breakfast packing day will be held on March 22. 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



Noisy Sunday Coming: Making Change Count on March 22

Our Noisy Offering in March falls on World Water Day. All living things need water to survive. People need clean, safe water to thrive.

Observed annually on March 22, World Water Day raises awareness of global needs for fresh water and the challenges of sanitation without clean water. The 2026 theme, 'Water and Gender', emphasizes safe drinking water and sanitation as fundamental human rights and critical enablers of gender equality.

Did you know?

- 2.2 billion people (1 in 4) still live without **safely managed drinking water**, including 115 million people who drink surface water. (WHO/UNICEF, 2023).
- 3.5 billion people (4 in 10) still live without **safely managed sanitation**, including 419 million who practise open defecation. (WHO/UNICEF, 2023).
- 2 billion people still lack **basic hygiene services**, including 653 million with no facility at all. (WHO/UNICEF, 2023).
- Around **1,000 daily deaths of children under five** are due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene. (WHO, 2023)
- Children under the age of 15 living in countries affected by **protracted conflict** are, on average, almost three times more likely to die from diarrhoeal diseases caused by a lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene than by direct violence. (UNICEF, 2019)
- Despite progress, women and girls continue to bear a disproportionate burden of water and sanitation responsibilities, and remain underrepresented in water governance and leadership. Young girls like Robina, who says, “The hardest part about being a girl is going to the well to get water.” Young girls like Robina, age 9, can spend as many as six hours a day fetching water, and they are easy prey when they travel alone – at risk of assault, trafficking and even murder.

What can we do? Our Noisy Offerings can help with creating clean water. From ELCA Good Gifts:

Water filter - \$30

When safe drinking water isn't available, a simple ceramic water filter is a lifesaver. Capable of purifying water without electricity or chemicals, a water filter is a reliable way to provide safe water when it's needed most.

Hygiene kit - \$25

We all know that hand-washing is an important way to stay healthy and control the spread of disease. But in many communities, critical supplies such as soap, bleach and even water are scarce. A hygiene kit provides sanitation supplies and education for households, schools, clinics and other public spaces. It's a simple yet powerful way to protect our most vulnerable neighbors and save lives.

We are able to “make change for the better” with the Noisy Sunday offering, no matter the amount. So send in your coins, cash and checks and make some noise on March 22. Together, we can CHANGE the water situation for someone, somewhere. Even a small donation or one coin can make a difference in a person's life.

Linda Marzullo, Social Ministry

Holy Week & Easter at Bethania

Good Friday Service, April 3

7pm in the Sanctuary

Chalk Cross, April 4

9am to 5pm in front of Sanctuary

Flower Cross, April 5

Before 9:30 Easter Worship

Easter Sunday, April 5

9:30am in the Sanctuary



Easter Lilies Available

Easter lilies will grace the sanctuary on Easter. If you would like one, please fill out the form below, include payment and return to the Church Office.

Easter Lily Order Form

I/we would like # _____ lily/lilies

in memory/in honor of

_____.

My/our name is _____.

Payment (\$10 each) is enclosed.

Please submit form and payment to Kristyl
in the Church Office before March 30.

Endowment Fund Scholarships Available

The Endowment Committee is pleased to announce that educational/vocational scholarships will once again be available for the fall of 2026. Applications are open to those who will be attending college or vocational training this fall, and who are also active in the church life of Bethania.

We invite you to apply by writing an essay introducing yourself to the committee. The content should include a description of your past and present church participation with Bethania, the influence your faith has had in making everyday life decisions, determined educational/vocational goals, and examples of your community service.

For anyone who might not receive a standard SYVUHS application form, some will also be available in the church office.

Pertinent Dates:

Feb. 2nd - SYVUHS students receive scholarship application packets.

March 31st- Applicant's due date to deliver or email applications to Bethania Lutheran Church using the email address below. (The SYVUHS date is March 6th however we are extending this date since some potential applicants may be unaware of the SYVUHS timelines.)

For further information, contact David Hemming, Endowment Chair.

David@1valley.com 805.680.7078

APRIL 10-12, 2026



Registrar: CarolSkoog@yahoo.com

408-398-5673

\$90 vehicle*/whole weekend

\$10 vehicle/day use

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

Save the Date—Dessert Auction for the Youth Group

Put it on your calendars! The Youth Group's next fundraiser will be one after your own heart, I mean stomach—a Dessert Auction! We will be auctioning off the most decadent desserts church members can come up with, so get ready! The Dessert Auction will be April 19, after the 9:30 worship service. If you can make a dessert to auction off, please let Pastor Chris know!

Church Business

Council Highlights - Feb. 19, 2026

March, already? The rains are past, spring flowers are coming, Lent has started, and Easter will come. It is the time of year when we look forward to new creation around us, and great things are happening around Bethania. I am excited to say that thanks to the Endowment Fund, you will see some new projects around the church campus.

1. The preschool has a beautiful new wood fence around the play yard, partially funded by the Endowment Fund.
2. New security cameras around the preschool and the campus at large are being installed.
3. We will soon see new roofs on the parsonage, the parsonage garage, the church office and the garage pantry.

We are thankful that the Endowment Fund earnings are large enough that we can use the revenues for things that we need and still make significant donations outside of Bethania. Please donate to the Endowment Fund when you can!

Finally, I'm really happy to say that Becky Sutherland is embarking on creating a new online Church Directory for us. She has experience with the company we'll use. If you're unable to bring in a photo for use, we'll take one for you. The contact info you want to share will be up to you, and it will be totally private for members only. Best of all, we can add or subtract members very easily, so it will always be up to date! No worries if you don't do computers—we can print you a copy.

**In Christ,
Jan Zigler**

Council Members Contact Info

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 January Financial Statement
Period Ending 01/31/26

Balance Sheet				
	December 2025	January 2026	Variance	Notes
Checking Account	\$ 87,989	\$ 71,837	\$ (16,152)	
Money Market Account	141,674	141,697	23	
CDs	153,778	154,292	513	
Fund Accounts	2,250,128	2,609,977	359,849	Cemetery, Endowment & Heritage
Accounts Receivable	(1,220)	77	1,297	
Fixed Assets	1,880,048	1,880,048	-	Property & Equipment
Total Assets	\$ 4,512,398	\$ 4,857,928	\$ 345,531	

Profit & Loss				
January	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
Total Income	\$ 23,816	\$ 28,649	\$ (4,833)	
Total Expenses	35,215	32,661	2,554	
Net Income	\$ (11,399)	\$ (4,012)	\$ (7,387)	

Offerings				
January	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
General Fund	\$ 19,891	\$ 22,348	\$ (2,457)	
Non-Members	641	1,089	(448)	
Total Offerings	\$ 20,532	\$ 23,437	\$ (2,905)	

Donations - Designated Funds and Pass-Through Accounts		
Pass-Through Accounts (Managed by BLC)		
Food Distribution	\$12,505	\$10,000 ELCA 2024 World Hunger grant; \$2,505 from individual donors
Noisy Offerings	\$286	
Youth Fund	\$1,610	Chili Cookoff
Preschool/Child Care Gifts	\$40	
Designated Funds (Managed Outside of BLC)		
BLCW	\$20	
Endowment Fund	\$180	
Heritage Fund	\$33	

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

Our Prayers

Carol Aides, Kief Adler, Andy Blanton, Sheldon & Pat Green, John Groh, Barbie Haile, Luis Haro, Belle Hoger, Ariana Macias, Robby Meinert, Analie & Larry Merich, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Jerry Olsen, Kate Pearsson, Tom & Carolynn Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Jane Shade, Judy Stamat, Hayes Robert White and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.

March 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 - 10:30 am** Praise Band Practice in the Sanctuary
11:30 am & 2:30 pm Chapel in the Sanctuary
5:30 pm Soup Supper in the Parish Hall During Lent
5:30 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall (Fireside Room during Lent)
7 pm Choir Practice in the Parish Hall
- Thursdays** **5:15-6:15 pm** Contemplative Prayer in the Sanctuary
5:15-6:15 pm Irish Dance in the Parish Hall
2nd & 4th **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

Sunday, March 1 and Other Sundays

Photos for the Congregational Directory in front of the church

Sunday, March 8

2 am Daylight-Saving Time Begins

12 noon BLCW Lunch in the Parish Hall

Thursday, March 12

7 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company

Friday, March 13

9 am Piece Makers in the Parish Hall

5:30 pm Touch-A-Truck Mtg. In the Fireside Room

Thursday, March 19

6 pm Church Council Meeting in the Fireside Room

Sunday, March 22

Noisy Offering during the 9:30 service

10:45 am Brown Bag Breakfast Packing in the Parish Hall

Friday, March 27

9 am Piece Makers in the Parish Hall

Sunday, March 29 - Palm Sunday

4-8 pm Private Event in the Parish Hall

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Image by [AstralEmber](#) from [Pixabay](#)