

Connect with Pastor Chris Brown

The longer you know me you'll learn I'm a film lover, and especially a Christopher Nolan film lover. He is a unique storyteller and director. I was hooked by his breakout film, *Memento*, about a man with amnesia who is trying to track down his wife's killer by tattooing clues on his body since he can't retain new memories. To add to the premise, the film is shot in reverse chronological order.

Christopher Nolan is special b/c he's old school. He utilizes computerized imaging as little as possible and prefers filming at locations around the world instead of studios. Rather than limiting his work, his reliance on the old ways makes his films feel even bigger. Christopher Nolan took his craft and used it to retell one of the biggest stories of all time: *The Odyssey*, based on Homer's epic about the hero Odysseus' desperate, 10-year trip home after the Trojan War.

Christopher Nolan does the epic story justice, staying true to most of the source material and adding his hallmark flare, but he makes one subtle change for audiences today that takes one of the oldest stories and makes it more relevant than ever. In Grecian antiquity, there was an important concept called *Xenia Law*, or *Zeus' Law*.

It simply stated that people should treat others, especially strangers and beggars, the way they want to be treated because one never knows if that stranger is a god in disguise. I imagine this sounds familiar. Judaism did not come up with the Golden Rule in a vacuum.

Most of us remember the story of the *Odyssey* and know of Odysseus' plight in angering Poseidon and being cursed from returning home. While that remains in Nolan's rendition, there's something else in his more human adaptation. There's something torturing Odysseus while he and his crew hit one tragedy after another. Avoiding angering the gods was an astute lesson in antiquity, but for the audience today, the lesson is in what happens when we break the Golden Rule. What are the consequences, not just for Odysseus and his crew, but for humanity, when we stop treating one another the way we want to be treated, when we let our base instincts become the norm, and cruelty and inhospitality reign supreme? Nolan is not subtle in his answer: the world falls apart. Tragedy.

It's no small feat to take such a grandiose story and do it justice in film and I walked out floored not just by what I encountered visually, but more by the lesson that was shared.

Are we losing our way? Has Xenia's law, or as Christians call it, the Golden Rule, been ignored for so long that we don't know how to get back? These are relevant lessons for us all today in a world that feels increasingly divided, but the story reminds us in the end: no matter how big the consequences, small actions of love and kindness can make all the difference. I give the film two big thumbs up and if you make it out to see it, I hope you enjoy!

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

Connect with Bethania Preschool & After School

Growing, Learning and Thriving

As summer comes to a close, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible memories made throughout the season. Our summer was full of water adventures, hands-on exploration, creative play, and countless moments of laughter. The children embraced each day with excitement, curiosity, and joy, building new friendships and creating memories that will last a lifetime. It has been a blessing to watch them learn, grow, and experience the wonder of childhood together.

As we look ahead, we are excited to welcome both new and returning students for the start of our new school year on **Aug. 13th**. A new school year brings fresh opportunities, new friendships, meaningful learning experiences, and the chance for every child to continue growing academically, socially, and emotionally.

We ask our Bethania church family to keep our students, families, teachers, and staff in your thoughts and prayers as we begin this new journey together. Pray that our classrooms will be filled with kindness, curiosity, patience, joy, and God's love, and that each child will feel safe, valued, and encouraged every day.

Thank you for your continued support, prayers, and encouragement. Your partnership means so much to our preschool family, and we are grateful to be part of such a caring and supportive church community.

With gratitude,

**Monica Dunn
Director
Bethania Preschool & After School Program**

Connect with Community

Wrapped in Love: Quilts for Those in Need

The PieceMakers meet Aug. 14 & 28 from 9 am - 12 noon in the Parish Hall. The group ties knots in the quilt layers and prepares the edging for binding. Quilts go to Sleep in Heavenly Peace and Lutheran World Relief.

Breakfasts of Kindness

Our next Brown Bag Breakfast packing day will be held on Aug. 2. 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.

The little brown bags we pack provide food items to seniors who need to take medication with food. Unfortunately, for many of them, their only meal of the day is the one they receive from the Buellton Senior Center. If they need to have food in order to take their medicine, many of them cannot afford the additional cost in their budgets. The seniors also receive an extra item so that they have snacks if needed.

Our costs keep rising – and our funds are going down! If you are able to donate any items below, please drop items 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:

- 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 small 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!

Produce Table Keeps on Growing!

Visit the Produce Table on Sundays between services, from approximately 10:30-11:15 in the breezeway by the Parish Hall. Check out the table and see what is available - everything from fresh strawberries and berries, organic eggs, lemons, vegetables, flowers and plants, home-baked goods, and more. Each week there will be something new, so don't forget to stop by on your way to coffee or to Unorthodox.

Anyone can donate to the table. "Shoppers" take what you want and donate whatever amount you choose. All funds raised at the Produce Table will be used to keep our Blessing Box in front of the church stocked, and to help with food distribution program needs.

Instead of garden or fruit tree bounty going to waste, offer to take excess produce off your neighbor's hands, and bring the items to the table!

Other ways to help:

- **Volunteers needed for Sunday mornings:** Sign up on a Sunday to help – it is easy! Bring out the bags, arrange the table, set up the signs, and count and turn the money into the church office or a council member.
- **Talk it up and Shop it up!**

Our Produce Table is a source of blessings to those who have excess produce, those who wish to have a little garden time, and those who love access to flowers, fruit and veggies that are farm fresh. Most especially we appreciate all of our generous donors, both shoppers and growers!

People who have helped run the stand recently include Carolyn Schuit, Lois De Meyer, Cheryl Heredia, Laura Ishikawa, Ron and Kathy Walsh, and Denise Morris. Thank you! Ask them about how hard it is to do and they will let you know... easy peasy!



Food Distribution & Blessing Box

Bethania continues operating as a Food Distribution site every Tuesday from 5:15-6:45 pm. We are the only food distribution in the Valley that serves people each week out of the month. The average number of households served in June was 250 Households and 827 Individuals. Unfortunately, our latest numbers are increasing again as the price of gasoline went up and people are having a hard time paying their bills.

You could help on a Tuesday. We really need people to help move items – we will train you to use a pallet jack! Think of the great workout you could get packing produce or filling those bags!

Our Tuesdays are split into shifts, with the morning crew coming in at 9:00 to pack the bags every week except the last week of the month (when we pack USDA items in the afternoon). The Food Bank truck arrives around 1:15ish, when we unload. Produce is packed at this time. Distribution helpers come around 4:45 for the evening shift. Clean up helpers are always welcome at the end of the night. We appreciate and value every volunteer who assists us with this monumental task and cannot thank them enough.

On Tuesdays we also distribute baby formula, protein drinks, donated diapers and wipes, along with incontinence and feminine hygiene items. Donations are much appreciated in these areas also.

You can make a difference!

For the Blessing Box we really appreciate canned proteins such as chicken, Spam and canned meats. Canned fruit and canned corn are also very popular, as are cereal and shelf stable milk. But any food item you use in your own home that does not require refrigeration is something that can be donated and appreciated by someone else who can't afford it.

Donations can be left in the church, in the Blessing Box, 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.

Noisy Sunday: Aug. 23rd School Kits and Personal Care Kits that will travel the world...

What is our donated change going to change this summer? We are going to partner with Lutheran World Relief to make the world better for others, one school kit and one personal care kit at a time!

We will be using our Noisy Offering donations towards the purchase of the last minute items to make up Personal Care Kits and School Supply kits. **(Assembly day will be Day of Service, Sept. 13th).**

Send your quarters around the world in the form of a kit! All it takes is a toss into our Noisy Offering buckets during the special offering. We also ask you to consider contributing other needed items (*See related article*) as the summer rolls along and the special "Back to School" sales happen. You can drop items at the church office, in the box in the Parish Hall, or contact me to arrange delivery.

LWR kits are a meaningful way to make a difference. By joining our coins and our donations together, we can turn ordinary items in extraordinary gifts. We will be helping children to attend school through our gifts of school supplies. We will be keeping people healthy in places where there is no access to soap and toothbrushes.

Together, we can "change" our world, one coin at a time, one "Kit of Care" at a time.

Personal Care & School Supply Kit Items Needed!



We will be collecting items this summer for the "DAY OF SERVICE" on Sept, 13th when we assemble Personal Care Kits and School Supplies for Lutheran World Relief.

These kits people dealing with some of life's most difficult situations – the aftermath of earthquakes and floods, fleeing home to escape violence, and living in extreme poverty. Our donations make kits that show we care. When LWR distributes **Personal Care Kits**, it's often to people who have lost everything. Around the world people suffer each day because of lack of basic hygiene. In refugee camps, after natural disasters, and in the world's poorest communities, a few simple items can mean the difference between sickness and health, life and death.

Why do we send school supplies? Imagine having to choose between a meal or purchasing a notebook. To choose which child gets to attend school – because of the cost. To the children who receive **School Kits**, these supplies mean the difference between getting an education or not. Public school is usually free, but in the places where LWR works, even a few required supplies, like pens and paper, may be more than many families can afford.

And when parents can only afford to send one of their children to school, girls rarely get to attend...yet the education level of mothers has the biggest impact on development and on the lives of future children.

Here are the items we are collecting. Watch for sales this summer! You can drop the items off at the church office, in the box in the Parish Hall or contact Linda Marzullo.

Items needed are:

For Personal Care Kits:

1. Bath size towels (light to medium weight, between 20"x40" & 27"x52"), dark colors, no white
2. Bars of soap (4-5 oz., any brand, in original wrapping – 2 per kit) – **We need a lot!**
3. Toothbrushes (adult size, in original packaging—bulk buys can be repackaged by us) **We have more than enough!**
4. Comb, sturdy wide toothed
5. Nail clippers (with or without nail files) – **We have enough, thank you!**

For School Supply Kits:

1. Pencil sharpeners
2. Blunt tip scissors
3. Notebooks – **Just a few more, thank you!**
4. #2 Pencils—unsharpened **We have enough, thank you!**
5. Blue or Black ink pens – no gel pens, please – **Just 50 more**
6. Rulers (plastic or wood, no metal edge) with inches and centimeters
7. 2-1/2" Erasers – **We need a lot!**
8. Box of Crayons (16 or 24 count) – **We need a lot!**

For more info about Brown Bag Breakfasts, Food Distribution, Blessing Box, Noisy Offering, Produce Table, Social Ministry, etc. you may contact the church office or Linda Marzullo at work: 805-688-5219 or via email: vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Theo Pub: Ask a Pastor Night



Theo Pub during the summer starts our "Ask a Pastor" night, where you can ask Pastor Chris any of the questions you've wondered about faith, theology, the Bible, etc.! We'll gather at Solvang Brew at 7pm on Aug. 13.

Come a little early and grab some food and a drink and meet us at the fire pit!

Coffee Time

Aug. 2	Mind Christian
Aug. 9	Alice & Robert Laufer
Aug. 16	Lisa & David Pedersen
Aug. 23	Carol Reiss & Cheryl Heredia
Aug. 30	Available

Thanks to Lou Fox Bender who will be getting Coffee Hosts. When she calls or talks to you, please say, "Yes, I will host coffee!"

End of Summer BBQ

Our annual End of Summer BBQ will be Aug. 30, from 11 — 1:00pm. We'll need help with set up, takedown, grilling, and prepping, so please let Pastor Chris know if you can help! Please bring a side dish to share!



Where has the summer gone? I hope that you have enjoyed some recreation and some enjoyable activities to set summer apart from the rest of the year. Before we know it, we'll be attending Bethania's end-of-summer barbecue on Aug. 30, and a new year of activities will begin.

Soon, committee and program chairs will meet to create a comprehensive activities calendar for 2027 to avoid scheduling conflicts as much as possible. With so many groups using our facilities, along with a robust schedule of church activities both on and off campus, it has become pretty common place for more than one event to be happening at the same time.

For example, this Oct. 4 will be Pastor Appreciation Day, Quilt-Blessing Sunday and a visit from Bishop Bos. Three events on one Sunday...what a wonderful "problem" to have.

To God be the glory!
Jan Zigler, Council President

Council Members	
Jan Zigler, President (559) 740-3676	Rikka Rasmussen, Vice-President (805) 453-8535
Cheryl Heredia, Secretary (714) 450-5487	Carol Skoog, Treasurer (408) 398-5673
Donna Hinsbeeck (805) 245-5907	Lou Fox Bender (805) 245-0553
Denise Johns (661) 713-1516	Ron Walsh (805) 705-3736
Robert Laufer (805) 717-1696	

CONNECT WITH FINANCES

JUNE 2026 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance Sheet				
	May 2026	June 2026	Variance	Notes
Checking Account	\$ 76,443	\$ 74,311	\$ (2,132)	
Money Market Account	141,790	141,815	25	
CDs	179,295	179,864	570	
Fund Accounts	2,609,977	2,609,977	-	Cemetery, Endowment & Heritage
Accounts Receivable	-	1,738	1,738	
Fixed Assets	1,925,054	1,925,054	-	Property & Equipment
Total Assets	\$ 4,932,559	\$ 4,932,759	\$ 200	

Profit & Loss				
June	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
Total Income	\$ 34,795	\$ 29,449	\$ 5,346	
Total Expenses	34,491	32,811	1,680	
Net Income	\$ 304	\$ (3,362)	\$ 3,666	

Offerings				
June	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
General Fund	\$ 28,886	\$ 22,348	\$ 6,538	
Non-Members	287	1,089	(802)	
Total Offerings	\$ 29,173	\$ 23,437	\$ 5,736	

Donations - Designated Funds and Pass-Through Accounts		
Pass-Through Accounts (Managed by BLC)		
Food Distribution	\$6,507	Synod Mission & Ministry Grant \$5,000; Individual donations \$1,507
Hike Against Hunger (June)	\$2,500	Charitable Fund Grant
Noisy Offerings	\$186	
Produce Table (June - Nov)	\$151	
Youth Fund	\$80	
Coffee Funds	\$89	
Designated Funds (Managed by BLC)		
Memorials	\$50	
Designated Funds (Managed Outside of BLC)		
Endowment Fund	\$50	
Heritage Fund	\$203	

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

CONNECT WITH SOCIAL MINISTRY

The next Social Ministry meeting is on **Wednesday, Aug. 5th at 6 pm in the Fireside Room**. This meeting is open to all interested persons and we are actively looking for new members. Please feel free to come and join the discussion.

Agenda items will include:

- Food Distribution numbers and final plans for ending the Drive Up section
- Fundraising ideas
- Reporting on Grants and Donations received
- Update on Brown Bag Breakfasts
- Produce Table report
- Planning for Day of Service on Sept. 13 and more!

We need church members to help us shape the direction of our ministries! Please consider joining us to help shape our future plans, either by attending this meeting or joining the committee. We are all involved in being the hands and feet of Jesus to the world.

Connect through Prayer

Carol Aides, Kief Adler, Andy Blanton, Sheldon & Pat Green, Barbie Haile, Karl Hatch, Belle Hoger, Ariana Macias, Robby Meinhert, Denise Morris, Mike Murray, Jerry Olsen, Kate Pearrrson, Tom & Carolynn Petersen, Doyle Phillips, Jane Shade, Judy Stamat, Hayes Robert White and those who serve our country both at home and abroad.

The family and loved ones of Barbara Kargard. Barbara passed away July 21, 2026.

Connect with Engagement

Sundays

9:30 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary

11:00 am Unorthodox in the Sanctuary

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, & 5:15-6:45 pm

Food Distribution Shifts

Wednesdays

9-10:30 am Praise Band Practice in the Sanctuary

5:30 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall

Thursdays

5:15-6:15 pm Contemplative Prayer in the Sanctuary

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

Aug. 13, 20 & 27

7-8 pm Boy Scouts in the Parish Hall

Fridays

9 am Jim Skoog practices in the Sanctuary

1 pm Lisa Blanton practices in the Sanctuary

Bethania Preschool & After School will be closed July 30 - Aug. 12.

Saturday, Aug. 1

8:00 am - 4:00 pm Fund for Santa Barbara in the Parish Hall and Fireside Room

Private Birthday Party on the Big Playground

Sunday, Aug. 2

10:30 am Brown Bag Breakfast Packing in the Parish Hall

Wednesday, Aug. 5

6:00 pm Social Ministry Committee Mtg. in the Fireside Room

Thursday, Aug. 6

All Day Carpet Cleaning On-Site

Saturday, Aug. 8

Eagle Scout Project on the Big Playground

Monday, Aug. 10

9 am Preschool Staff CPR Training in the Fireside Room

Wednesday, Aug. 12

6:00-8:00 pm Youth Connect in the Fireside Room

6:30-9:00 pm Danish Sisterhood Mtg. In the Parish Hall

7:00 pm The Four Norsemen Practice in the Sanctuary

Thursday, Aug. 13

7 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company

Friday, Aug. 14 & 28

9 am Quilting in the Parish Hall

Saturday, Aug. 15

9:00 am - 4:00 pm Birthday Party on the big playground

Wednesday, Aug. 19

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

Thursday, Aug. 20

11:00 am Celebration of Life for Norma Rose in the Sanctuary

6:00 pm Council Meeting in the Fireside Room

Saturday, Aug. 22

8:00 am - 1:00 pm A to Z Cooking Class in the Kitchen, Parish Hall and Fireside Room

Sunday, Aug. 23

Noisy Offering

Wednesday, Aug. 26

5:00 pm Document Signing Party in the Fireside Room

Sunday, Aug. 30

11:00 am - 1:00 pm End of Summer Barbecue in the Parking Lot and Big Playground

2:00 pm Celebration of Life for Joan Fuller in the Sanctuary

Connect with us

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Bethania
Lutheran
Church



@bethanialutheran

The Beacon August 2026
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