

The Beacon

October 2026

Connect with Pastor Chris Brown

This month we will begin our Stewardship Campaign 2027, and I wanted to use this newsletter to share a little about it and our theme this year. Last year we committed to holding stewardship campaigns each year with a reminder of how our church functions and in the hope that folks can continue to support the work and ministry of Bethania. It was a wonderful campaign last year and I'm so grateful to everyone for their participation and openness.

I realize that stewardship campaigns usually take on a focused message of "We Need Money!". While it's true that the primary source of income for any church is that of its community's donations, my hope is that our minds don't go into a negative perspective of survival, but rather into a hopeful perspective of supporting amazing work that we genuinely believe in.

Our stewardship theme this year is "Giving to What I Believe In". Within Christianity, "belief" is central to our identity, but I've spent a long time trying to help us reshape our concept of belief and move away from just an intellectual acceptance of something, to belief as a jumping off point into a way of being and doing; and I think we live this out pretty well at Bethania.

I was recently asked to have a meeting with a delegation from ELCA Churchwide that represents innovative ministries of the ELCA.

They were visiting our synod and asked the Bishop and the Directors of Evangelical Ministries which churches in the synod they should talk to and Bethania was one of their suggestions. This delegation was looking to hear from congregations who were not in survival mode but had the space to think about ministry in innovative and forward focused ways, and it felt like an amazing affirmation to have Bethania be recommended as one of those churches. They wanted to hear about our food distribution, Unorthodox, and the ways we prioritize gathering so regularly for community and compassion.

We spoke for almost two hours about how large and efficient the food distribution is and how incredible it is that a small church is doing such amazing work, we talked about the curiosity and craving that people have for the non-traditional conversations at Unorthodox, and we talked about how any church, regardless of how big or small, can prioritize gathering for joy and community, not just as an amazing ministry, but as the way forward for the future of the Church. While we were talking, all the boxes for the Day of Service were visible on the stage, which they asked about, and it gave me the opportunity to share that we do a lot of different ministries throughout the year. It opened the conversation to the Blessing of the Quilts coming up and support for Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Brown Bag Breakfasts for seniors in Buellton, the Blessing Box and the Produce Table. I spent a lot of time

talking about how we've broken away from the assumption that all church activities must have a service component, and while we clearly prioritize service, we also prioritize fellowship. I was able to share about the rejuvenation of BLCW and the fun our women keep having, the potlucks through the year, Fastelavn, the Halloween Party, and our growing youth group. This delegation was so impressed by what we're doing here at Bethania, and they were not shy in sharing this is not the norm with a lot of the churches in the ELCA.

I share all this to highlight we are "a church that does stuff". This has become a tagline I've been hearing from other members and why they are a part of our congregation. It's simple and I love it! When we do this stewardship campaign and all of our stewardship campaigns in the future, I don't want anyone to feel like they have to give to a church so it'll survive, I want people to feel like they get to donate to a church they believe in—a church that takes our faith and puts it into action.

Starting in October and going through November, we'll feature members sharing what it is at Bethania they believe in, why they give, and what supporting this church does for us and for our community. I would like to invite everyone to reflect on what it is at Bethania they believe in and see the gift this church continues to offer in experiencing God in our community and in our service.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Chris Brown

Connect with Bethania Preschool & After School

October is here, and that means all kinds of **tricks, treats, pumpkins, and surprises!** We are so excited for all that this month has in store for our Bethania children. October will be filled with hands-on learning, exciting adventures, and plenty of opportunities to explore the fun and wonder of the season. Our **Preschool** will be exploring all things **pumpkins**, from the pumpkin life cycle, to carving, to tasting and eating them! The children will get to experience and learn about pumpkins in so many different ways.

Miss Ashley's class will explore different types of **shapes through jack-o'-lanterns**, discovering how shapes can come together to create fun and spooky faces.

Miss Leslie's class will get to indulge in some **spooky Monster Movement**, getting their wiggles out while having fun with movement and music.

Miss Christina and Miss Angie's classes will be "frolicking" through the **pumpkin patches**, learning about our local farmers and all the hard work that goes into growing and bringing pumpkins to our community just in time for Halloween!

Our **After School Program** will get to enjoy their very own **pumpkin patch** and begin a fun science experiment called "**Pumpkin Jack**." Through this experiment, the children will learn about how pumpkins decompose and what happens when we bury pumpkin seeds and give them the opportunity to grow.

October will also bring our **first fundraiser of the school year, our Bethania Fun Run on Oct. 9th!** The children will be dashing around the track as they raise money to help provide our classrooms with **new, inclusive classroom furniture and outdoor storage areas**. We are so excited to see our children have fun while helping make a difference in their school!

And, of course, we can't forget the **best part of Halloween!** The children will enjoy Halloween parties and a special **trick-or-treating experience at Atterdag Village**, creating wonderful memories that they will be able to share with their friends and teachers.

We hope your October is filled with **joy, laughter, family fun, and God's blessings.**

Thank you, as always, for your continued **prayers, well wishes, encouragement, and support** of Bethania and our children. We are so grateful to have such a wonderful church family walking alongside us!

**With deep gratitude,
Monica, Director**

Connect in Service

For more information about Food Distribution, Blessing Box, Brown Bag Breakfasts and other Social Ministry Service, please contact If you have any questions, contact the church office or Linda Marzullo at work: 688-5219 or via email: vikingpressprint@verizon.net

Helping Those In Need Right Here

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. We are very busy! We purchase food items in stores, online and from the Food Bank to keep the distribution going.

We have some great volunteers...we can always use more. You can come at 9:00 am on Tuesday and help pack bags. You can come at 1:30 and pack produce. Or you can come in the evening and help us set up and distribute the food to those in need. We are especially in need of people to help unload the truck on Tuesday afternoons and move pallets around. We would

love to have your help! Contact me or Donna Hinsbeeck if you would be interested.

The Blessing Box has also been going gangbusters. With the cost of food and fuel, people cannot cover all their bills. If you have items to donate, just drop them in the box anytime. If you would like to "take a shift" to fill the box, let me know – you get to choose the time and day, and I will give you our secret code so you can grab the items from the pantry to fill the box. A new volunteer was shocked at how quickly the items are gone from the box. The action at the box is non-stop. People come at all times of the day and night and take what helps them the most. If you want to help keep the box filled, let me know.

I am so thankful that as a church, we are making a big difference in so many lives here in our area with our work in fighting food insecurity.

"Day of Service" Wrap Up



Thanks to everyone who helped at the annual "Day of Service". We made a new record with 199 School Kits and 236

Personal Care Kits. We had a record number of generous donations to this project and we outperformed all expectations. Great job, everyone!

The School Kits and Personal Care Kits will be sent to LWR in October. Lutheran World Relief will send them out around the world where they are most needed. Just think: our hands + donated supplies + wrapping day = Love/Care/Health/Schooling sent around the world to someone in need.

Thank you for your support of this important annual event. Bethania volunteers' work directly touches those in need, by sending supplies and our compassion through Lutheran World Relief.

Noisy Sunday - Oct. 25th

The Noisy Offering will be used to raise funds for the Tuesday Food Distribution Christmas special project: Gift Cards for Families.

This year, we are giving each household that comes to our food distribution a \$25 gift card. Gift cards will help the families with the extra expenses that come from the holidays: food, gas, pharmacy, gift shopping, meals. We will also be encouraging our members to donate gift cards to our families (see related article).

We continue to "make change for the better" with the Noisy Offerings. This offering will help make a local family's life a little easier at the end of the year.

So bring your coins and make a noise on Oct. 25th. Together, we can CHANGE so many things!

PieceMakers Connect Through Quilting

The PieceMakers have over 60 quilts completed this year. Sleep in Heavenly Peace received 27 quilts in March and the rest will be on display Oct. 4 for the quilt blessing. Due to the increase in price for the batting we are charging \$125 for every quilt sold. The quilt tops are sewn at home. The backing, batting and tops are assembled in the Parish Hall and tied. Then the edges are machine sewn. Everyone is welcome to join us, no experience required. If you can tie a knot you can tie a quilt.

Some of the quilts will also be going to Lutheran World Relief. The quilts, along with the school kits and personal hygiene quilts we made in September, will be delivered to an Ingathering of LWR Materials on Oct. 21 at Mt. Cross Lutheran Church in Camarillo. Thanks to Bridget Cassara for taking them to the drop-off point.



Some of our Piece Makers

Unorthodox Gathering - Work that Reconnects

The Work draws on systems thinking, Deep Ecology, and spiritual traditions—especially Buddhist and indigenous teachings—all pointing to one understanding: we are not separate from each other or from the living world.

It has been used by activists, educators, faith communities, and ordinary people. It works because it doesn't ask us to overcome our feelings or bypass our grief. It moves through them.

"The central purpose of the Work that Reconnects is to help people uncover and experience their innate connections with each other and with the systemic, self-healing powers of the web of life, so that they may be enlivened and motivated to play their part in creating a sustainable civilization. ~ Joanna Macy

Family Campout

*Campsites are full, but you are invited to
JOIN US ON SATURDAY,
Oct 10th*

9:00 Canoeing/kayaking

**ALL DAY – Swimming, boating, fishing,
hiking, playground, volleyball, arcade,
games**

1:00 Group hike

3:00 Yoga

4:00 Games – Corn hole, cards, etc.

**6:00 Potluck – Bring plates and
utensils and something to share**

7:00 Campfire, songs and jokes

More info:

Carol Skoog (408) 398-5673

Becky Sutherland (562) 505-1726

Coffee Hosts October 2026

Oct. 4 - BLCW

Oct. 11 - Kathy & Ron Walsh

Oct. 18 - Available

Oct. 25 - Available

***Please join us for coffee and treats on
Nov. 1. During coffee hour we will
celebrate Thora Mae Andersen's 90th
birthday.***

Theo Pub - Oct. 8

Theo Pub is getting back into topic centered nights. All are welcome to think about questions involving our faith. The topic this month will be "Artificial Intelligence". We'll gather at Solvang Brew at 7pm on Oct. 8th. Come a little early and grab some food and a drink and meet us at the fire pit!



Save the date for Bethania's annual Halloween Party.

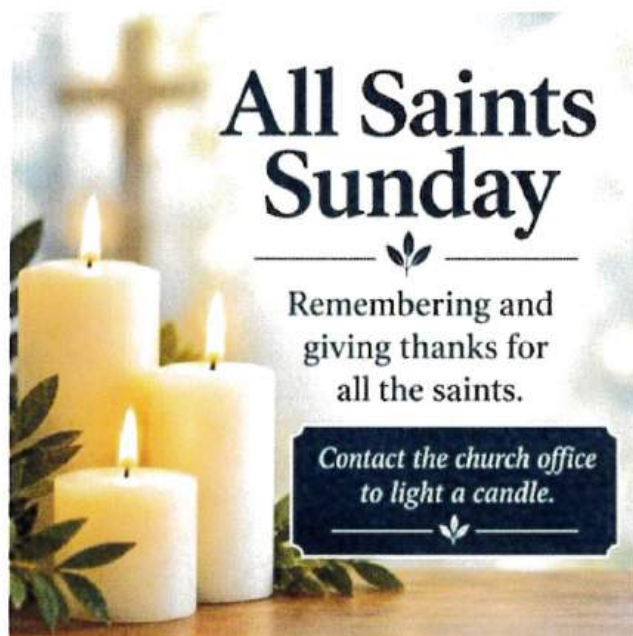
Bethania Parish Hall

- Saturday, Oct. 24
- 5:30 to 7:45 pm
- \$8/Person
- \$30/Family

Help us decorate on Friday, Oct. 23 at 5:30 and help us clean up on Sunday after worship! And please share with all your friends and family!

Halloween Party Candy Donations

We need bags of candy for the Halloween Party on Saturday, Oct. 24th. Donations can be dropped off weekday mornings in the church office or after 5:00 PM on Friday, Oct. 23rd in the Parish Hall.



Christmas Gifting Opportunity: Helping Our Local Families

Would you like to be an “angel” to a local family in need? Dust off your angel wings and consider donating some funds or gift cards to help a local family ease the financial strain of the Christmas holiday season. These are the families who receive food from our weekly food distribution and they can use some extra help.

Our goal this year is to give each household a \$25 gift card to help with expenses. You can donate to the Noisy Offering, or purchase your own gift cards and deliver them to the Church Office before Dec. 11th.

Please make each gift card the same amount (\$25). You can choose where you would like to help out. 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.

“Grateful Goods” Sale Nov. 21

It's that time of year when we look for unique gifts and think about supporting causes we believe in. Now you can do both on Nov. 21st. Skip “black Friday” crowds and come to an event that does good for our community! **The “Grateful Goods” Arts & Crafts Sale** will be held at Bethania from 10 am-3 pm on Nov. 21. Featuring vendors with unique items, food, raffle prizes and a silent auction. Plan to attend! Handcrafted items, unique gifts, and specialty items will be on for sale.

The funds raised at this event will support Bethania's Tuesday Food Distribution.

How can you help? We need...

Baked Goods - (Jams, pickles, bread, cakes, cookies, pies – whatever you feel like making) – contact Linda or the Church Office and let us know what you are able to donate.

Volunteers on the day of the sale, to help with the Kitchen, Bake Sale, Raffle Prizes and other tasks

Shoppers – come and look for unique gifts, handmade items, and raffle prizes that will get your holiday shopping jump started!

Crafters and Artists needed – we have booth spaces available if you are interested. Booth fees support the food distribution.

Connect with Council

Bethania is currently conducting an internal financial audit, which has been long overdue. What this means is that the Finance Committee, along with other financially savvy people from various committees at church, with taking a look at how our programs and committees are processing monies that they receive and spend. Rest assured, no one is auditing their own committee, and no one is under suspicion or in trouble. This is just a good thing to do from time to time, and we haven't done it in many years.

Treasurer Carol Skoog and the Council have been working hard to modernize financial procedures at church, which also hasn't happened in a long time. Many of these procedures were suggested by an ELCA resource, and most of them are for protecting the church as well as people who handle money here. For example, a new procedure is for two people instead of just one person to move offering money from the plates to a bank bag, lock it, and to replace the key. Are we mistrustful of people? No. Is it just a good idea? Yes.

With our new procedures in place, we anticipate that the financial audit will report very few issues. Expect a full report from the Audit Committee as part of the church's Annual Report in January 2027.

**In Christ,
Jan Zigler**

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 Social Ministry

The next Social Ministry meeting is Wednesday, Oct. 7 at 5:30 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 information and planning
"Grateful Goods" Arts & Crafts Sale planning
Fund raising
Gift Card project
Update on Brown Bag Breakfasts
Produce Table report
and more!

We need church members to shape the direction of our ministries! Please consider joining us by attending this meeting or joining the committee. We are the hands and feet of Jesus to the world.

Connect in 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.

Bethania Lutheran Church
Notes for August Financial Statement
Period Ending 08/31/26

Balance Sheet				
	July 2026	August 2026	Variance	Notes
Checking Account	\$ 64,057	\$ 59,695	\$ (4,362)	
Money Market Account	141,839	141,863	24	
CDs	180,417	180,990	573	
Fund Accounts	2,609,977	2,609,977	-	Cemetery, Endowment & Heritage
Accounts Receivable	2,642	2,728	86	
Fixed Assets	1,925,054	1,925,054	-	Property & Equipment
Total Assets	\$ 4,923,986	\$ 4,920,308	\$ (3,678)	

Profit & Loss				
August	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
Total Income	\$ 26,263	\$ 28,649	\$ (2,386)	
Total Expenses	31,142	32,561	(1,419)	
Net Income	\$ (4,879)	\$ (3,912)	\$ (967)	

Offerings				
August	Actual	Budget	Variance	Notes
General Fund	\$ 21,069	\$ 22,348	\$ (1,279)	
Non-Members	451	1,089	(638)	
Total Offerings	\$ 21,520	\$ 23,437	\$ (1,917)	

Donations - Designated Funds and Pass-Through Accounts		
Pass-Through Accounts (Managed by BLC)		
Food Distribution	\$2,426	\$1,000 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Illinois), \$1,426 individual donations
Food Distribution Lease	\$8,750	ELCA Evangelical Outreach Mission Team
Noisy Offerings	\$166	
Produce Table (June - Nov)	\$441	
Youth Fund	\$100	
Coffee Funds	\$127	
Designated Funds (Managed by BLC)		
Memorials	\$200	
Norma Ciriza Rose Memorial	\$1,201	
Designated Funds (Managed Outside of BLC)		
BLCW	\$40	
Endowment Fund	\$1,050	
Heritage Fund	\$17	

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

CONNECT WITH ENGAGEMENT

Sundays

9:30 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary
Sunday School

11:00 am Unorthodox in the Sanctuary
Sunday school

Mondays

5:30-7 pm Dungeons and Dragons Teen Group
in the Parish Hall

6-7 pm Praise Band Practice in the Sanctuary

7 pm AA in the Fireside Room

Tuesdays

9:30 am, 1:45 pm, & 5:15-6:45 pm
Food Distribution Shifts

Wednesdays

11:30 am PS Chapel in the Sanctuary

2:30 pm AS Chapel in the Sanctuary

5:30 pm Yoga in the Parish Hall

7:00 pm Choir Practice 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

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

Saturday, Oct. 3

Private Birthday Party Parish Hall, Fireside
Room & Kitchen

Sunday, Oct. 4

Pastor Appreciation Sunday

Bishop Brenda Bos visits.

Quilt Blessing

Wednesday, Oct. 7

10:30 am Audit Committee in the Office

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

Thursday, Oct. 8

7:00 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company

Friday, Oct. 9

9:00 am Piece Makers in the Parish Hall

Church Camp-out at Lake Lopez - Sunday, Oct. 12

Saturday, Oct. 10

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

Wednesday, Oct. 14

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

Thursday, Oct. 15

6:00 pm Council Meeting in the Fireside Room

Wednesday, Oct. 21

Ingathering of LWR Materials

Friday, Oct. 23

9:00 am Piece Makers in the Parish Hall

5:30 pm Set-Up & Decorate for Halloween Party

Saturday, Oct. 24

Halloween Party

Sunday, Oct. 25 - Reformation Sunday

Wear red.

9:30 am Noisy Offering

Clean-Up after the Halloween Party in the Parish
Hall

2:30 pm SIMH Recital in the Sanctuary

Connect with us

www.bethanialutheran.net

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Lutheran
Church



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