The Beacon

NOVEMBER 2026

Connect with Pastor Chris Brown

There's a novel experience for me as pastor of Bethania, and as we focus on stewardship this month, I wanted to use my newsletter article to share this experience with you all. At my core, I'm a thinker and a dreamer. From the moment I decided I wanted to be a pastor to starting at Bethania, and even now 11 years later, I can't stop but thinking about church in general and dreaming about what the future may look like. I've been this way my whole life, thinking about what the future may hold. What's novel is when a dreamer's dreams become reality. In fact, it's so novel I'm not really sure what to do with the feeling.

I became a pastor for two reasons: I wanted to help cultivate a sense of community and I wanted to be part of a church that values compassion—not just talking about it, but living it out. As I look around at Bethania, as I dream about a space with values and ministries and gatherings that people can believe in, there's not a ton of dreaming that needs to happen because those dreams have become a reality. What do you do when you arrive at the dream? For a dreamer, they keep dreaming, but what we should do is just simply embrace it and enjoy the experience of God's presence in our community.

We are a church that on the books may seem small compared to other churches. But we are a church that is mighty in how it lives out its faith. We have an amazing ministry that feeds hundreds of people every week; we have a group of dedicated women that get together in fellowship and laughter while helping children feel the warmth of handcrafted quilts; we have an intergenerational community, both of the Danish roots that established this town, and people who have moved into the area who have discovered and want to experience our values; we have a robust youth group and children's ministry making plenty of room for the joy of children and the wonderful ways they teach us about God, as well as helping cultivate values that will help them in their futures; we have people who have been injured by past church experiences, or people who are deeply curious about the diverse and unorthodox ways God is present in our lives and in the cosmos and have decided to call Bethania home; we have lifelong friends who have been there for one another for decades inviting new friends to be part of our community and make this feel like far more than church once a week; and we have space where we can gather simply for the joy of experiencing God in laughter and fun.

All of these were things once dreamt about, and all of them are an incredible reality of God working in our community. This is what I believe in as Church. We are not strangers who show up for one hour a Sunday, but community that shows up in each other's lives, in celebration and support. A church was always meant to be a hub, a town center, where people can be rejuvenated and connected to the best life has to offer, and by God, we're doing it! I've spent so much time in churches that ask people to give money to dreams, things to come, things

hoped for, and we should keep dreaming and hoping for new ways to experience God both in our lives and in our community. But what a gift to be able to look at Bethania as it is now with such pride and joy. I'm so grateful for this community, for the effort we've put into living out our faith, the ways we welcome people to join us, and the joy we feel in experiencing God now. I pray that you can take a moment to look at our church and see so much going on and how amazing it is. And I pray it is a church you continue to believe in now and continue to help dream about its future for a long time to come.

In God's Love,
Pastor Chris

Stewardship Sunday—Nov. 22

I would like to invite you all to join us for Stewardship Sunday at our 9:30 worship service. I wanted to share ahead of time how the service will go as a reminder that this service really is between you and God. Our Stewardship Campaign, "Giving to What I Believe In", will culminate with an offering of our time, talent, and resources to God so that Bethania can continue to be God's hands and feet in the Santa Ynez Valley and beyond. Throughout the campaign you will hear from members what it is about Bethania they believe in, with the hopes that it compels you to look at our church and consider what it is about Bethania you believe in. Everyone will receive an envelope and paper to fill out that will allow them the space to consider what they will commit to God in the future. Please fill out that paper, place it in the envelope and seal it. We will collect it and leave it at the altar during the service and afterwards we will take the envelopes outside, and with a short liturgy, burn them and let the smoke rise up to God. I want to remind everyone, neither myself, nor anyone at Bethania will see what you write on that paper. It will be between you and God, and the burning of envelopes will ensure it stays that way.

Connect with Bethania Preschool & After School

As we welcome November, we are reminded that this season is about gratitude, thankfulness, and togetherness. At Bethania, we strive to help children understand that gratitude is more than saying "thank you". It is recognizing the kindness around us, appreciating the people in our lives, and finding joy in the simple moments we share. Throughout the month, we will be encouraging our children to practice kindness, celebrate one another, and discover the many ways we can show appreciation every day.

In our preschool classrooms, the children will explore the beauty of fall through nature walks, seasonal observations, and hands on discoveries. They will collect leaves, acorns, sticks, and other natural treasures to inspire their creativity and curiosity. Through fall inspired art projects, stories, songs, and classroom conversations, our youngest learners will explore the changing world around them while learning about thankfulness, friendship, and the importance of caring for one another.

Our after school children will continue these themes through creative fall projects, outdoor exploration, and meaningful conversations about gratitude. They will be encouraged to reflect on the people and experiences they appreciate, recognize acts of kindness, and find ways to give back through thoughtful actions.

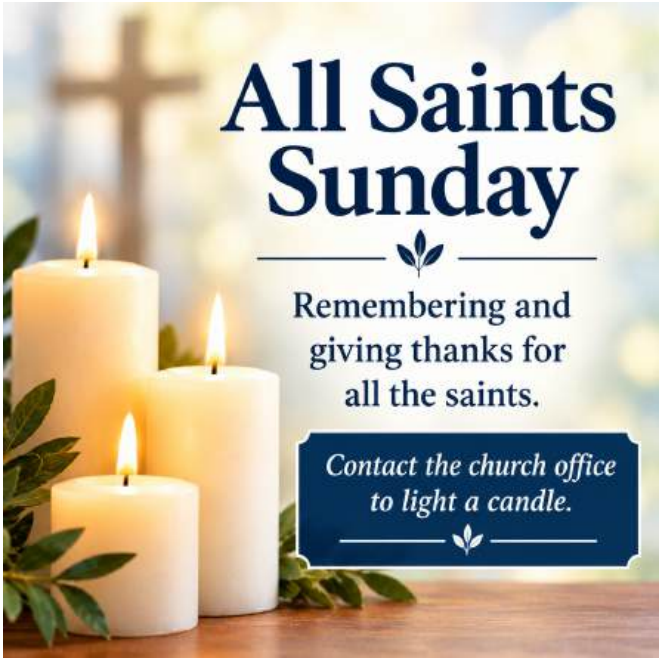
Whether through sharing a laugh, helping a friend, or enjoying time together outdoors, we hope to nurture a sense of belonging and remind each child that even the smallest acts of kindness can make a difference.

As we enter this season of thanksgiving, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our church family for your continued support, encouragement, and care for Bethania. Your kindness and commitment help create a place where children feel safe, loved, and valued, and where families know they are part of a caring community. We are truly thankful to be surrounded by a congregation that believes in the importance of nurturing the next generation. From all of us at Bethania, we wish you a November filled with peace, joy, gratitude, and meaningful moments together.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Monica
Director

Connect with Community





BLCW Activities in November

Nov. 7, Saturday, 9:00 -11:00

Cemetery Work Day. Please bring a rake and spend just two hours sprucing up our church cemetery. If you don't have a rake, you can pull weeds!

Nov. 9, Monday, 5:30-8:30

Christmas Card Party for Meals on Wheels recipients and business meeting at Cheryl Heredia's. Men will meet there at 5:30 and go out to dinner together. Card-making will begin at 5:30; the short business meeting will begin at 6:30. We'll hear a treasurer's report and choose Christmas gifts to buy for women and children from the ELCA Good Gifts Catalogue Please bring scissors and, if you'd like, a sweet or savory snack to share. Questions? Call Cheryl @ (714)450-5487.

Nov. 21, Saturday, 9:30-3:00

Grateful Goods Craft Faire bake sale to benefit Food Distribution. Calling all cookie monsters! This is the fourth year of the event and our bake sale. Please let Jan Zigler know, (559)740-3676, if you can help set up at 9:30 and/or work a shift for an hour or two. We will need cookies, brownies, muffins, cakes, breads….you get it. Last year the bake sale earned nearly $500! Please package your items and price them if you can. If not, we will do that for you. Gluten-free items are always welcome.

Theo Pub



Theo Pub is getting back into topic centered nights. All are welcome to think about questions involving our faith. We'll gather at Solvang Brew at 7pm on Nov. 12. Come a little early and grab some food and a drink and meet us at the fire pit!





"Grateful Goods" Arts & Crafts Sale, Bake Sale, Silent Auction and Raffles – Nov. 21

It's that time of year when we all start looking for unique gifts and thinking about supporting causes we believe in – now you can do both on Nov. 21st. It's coming! **Our 5th "Grateful Goods" Arts & Crafts Sale will be held at Bethania from 10 am-3 pm Nov. 21.** Featuring vendors with beautiful items, bake sale goodies provided by BLCW and friends, food, raffle prizes and a silent auction – plan to attend! Handcrafted items, unique gifts, and specialty items will be available from our vendors.

The funds raised at this event will support Bethania's Tuesday Food Distribution as we head into the holidays.

How can you help? We need…

- **Auction Items**: Help us get exciting auction items to raise funds for our distribution. Looking for vacation getaways, wine, artwork, unique items, services…help us make this auction super special.
- **Baked Goods** donated! (Jams, pickles, bread, cakes, cookies, pies – whatever you feel like making) – contact Jan Zigler or the Church Office and let us know what you are able to donate.

- **Volunteers** 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 still have booth spaces available if you are interested. Booth fees support the food distribution. Please contact Linda for more info. (Contact info at the back of The Beacon)

CONNECT IN SERVICE

Cemetery Workday
Saturday, Nov. 7
9-11 am

All are welcome to join the committee sprucing up Solvang Cemetery (on Atterdag Rd.) before Veterans' Day. Please bring rakes, brooms, clippers, etc.

Thank you,
Hope to see you then,
Betty Petersen
Chair

Next Brown Bag Senior Breakfast Packing: Nov. 8th

With your help, we continue to provide this service to local seniors. The breakfast bags provide food items to seniors who need to take medication with food. For many of them, their only meal of the day is the one they receive from the Buellton Senior Center. 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 can donate any of the items below, please drop items by the office or deliver on packing day. You may also make a donation and earmark it "Brown Bag Breakfasts" and we 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!

–Linda Marzullo (Contact info at the back of The Beacon)

Noisy Sunday: Nov.22
Make Change for the Better

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

Our goal is to give each household that comes to our food distribution a $25 gift card at the last distribution of the year. Gift cards will be intended to help the families with the extra expenses that come from the holidays: food, gas, pharmacy, gift shopping, meals.

Gift Cards will be very important to the many families we serve weekly this year since we are closing for the Christmas break. This little boost will be a big help to our households who rely on us to get through the month.

We continue to "make change for the better" with the Noisy Sunday offerings. Your donations will help a local family's life a little easier at the end of the year. If you would rather purchase your own gift cards and bring them to the office, that would be appreciated as well. We will be distributing the gift cards on Dec. 22nd at our final distribution of 2026.

So bring your coins-cash-checks and make a lively noise on Nov. 22. Together, we can CHANGE so many things!

– Linda Marzullo

It's Easy to Bake Communion Bread

Emily Abello, Anna Cook, Kristyl Downey, Betty Madsen, Elizabeth Quick and I are the Bethania Communion Bread Bakers. We each spend about an hour baking 6 rounds of bread once or twice during each year (no yeast involved), then bring it to Bethania's kitchen freezer for storage until needed.

If you would like to join this group and learn to bake this tasty bread, text me at 805-350-8780 and I will set up a time for you to observe one of us baking.

Nancy Emerson, Chairperson

Connect to Congregational Business

Council Highlights

Fall is in full swing, and with fall comes our annual congregational meeting in November. This year it falls on Sunday, Nov. 22, at 9:45 in the Parish Hall, and at the meeting, we plan to approve the budget for 2027, approve members of the 2027 Council, Endowment/Heritage and Cemetery committees, and approve the rental contract for the proposed new Food Distribution location in Buellton.

Hopefully, you'll ask your budget questions at the budget forum on Sunday, Nov. 1 at the coffee hour. If you miss the forum, you can always call **Carol Skoog, Treasurer**.

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	

Commercial Lease for Food Distribution

Last year our congregation gathered to vote on a commercial lease for the food distribution. That lease ended up being a bad fit for the food distribution as the property owners had a lot of contingencies that made it feel very risky, so we voted not to go through with it. We thought we'd keep our eyes open but did not have a lot of hope that a better space would become available. However, at the end of August, a church member learned of our needs and had a vacated space become available in Buellton at 250 G Industrial Way and wanted to offer it for lease. The space is 3,000 sq ft, $5,700 a month, has a wraparound parking lot, has a loading door in the back, concrete floors, is next to two transit stops, and plenty of room for growth, if that's ever deemed needed. The property owner is aware of both what the space would be used for and how big our food distribution is and is excited to have the space used for this need.

Some of our Social Ministry Committee went and visited the space and took some pictures and then brought it back to the Social Ministry Committee at large. The Social Ministry Committee met several times to go through the lease, request some changes, which were granted, and then considered if this was the best thing for the food distribution. After some conversation and input, the Social Ministry Committee voted 8-2 to agree to this lease and send it to the congregation for approval at our **Nov. 22 meeting** in line with our constitutional requirement that leases are voted upon by the congregation.

This lease has been looked at by our Social Ministry Committee, Council, and our Finance Committee, with some minor recommendations. This lease does not have any contingencies like that property last year and is a standard American Industrial Real Estate Association Lease. I will send it out to the congregation in preparation for the Nov. 22 meeting and am available by phone or email for any questions you may have.

Thank You,
Pastor Chris

Social Ministry Committee Meeting – Nov. 4

Social Ministry meets on **Wednesday, Nov. 4th 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, 11-21
- Gift Card project for distribution 12-22
- Brown Bag Breakfast packing 11-8
- Produce Table
- 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.

–**Linda Marzullo** (Contact info at the back of The Beacon)

Connect with Finances
Carol Skoog, Treasurer

Bethania Lutheran Church
Notes for September Financial Statement
Period Ending 09/30/26

Balance Sheet				
	August 2026	**September 2026**	**Variance**	**Notes**
Checking Account	$ 59,695	$ 48,532	$ (11,163)	
Money Market Account	141,863	141,886	23	
CDs	180,990	181,565	575	
Fund Accounts	2,609,977	2,609,977	-	Cemetery, Endowment & Heritage
Accounts Receivable	2,728	2,830	102	
Fixed Assets	1,925,054	1,907,588	(17,466)	Write off assets < $2,500 = $17,466
Total Assets	**$ 4,920,308**	**$ 4,892,379**	**$ (27,928)**	

Profit & Loss				
September	**Actual**	**Budget**	**Variance**	**Notes**
Total Income	$ 27,529	$ 28,649	$ (1,120)	
Total Expenses	33,066	32,561	505	
Net Income	**$ (5,537)**	**$ (3,912)**	**$ (1,625)**	

Offerings				
September	**Actual**	**Budget**	**Variance**	**Notes**
General Fund	$ 21,918	$ 22,348	$ (430)	
Non-Members	766	1,089	(323)	
Total Offerings	**$ 22,684**	**$ 23,437**	**$ (753)**	

Donations - Designated Funds and Pass-Through Accounts		
Pass-Through Accounts (Managed by BLC)		
Food Distribution	$2,185	Individual donors
Noisy Offerings	$1,389	
Produce Table (June - Nov)	$477	
Youth Fund	$50	
Coffee Funds	$106	
Designated Funds (Managed Outside of BLC)		
Endowment Fund	$300	
Heritage Fund	$25	

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

This Month at Bethania

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 & 2:30 pm 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

Sunday, Nov. 1 - All Saints' Sunday
9:30 am All Saints' Candle Lighting
10:45 am Budget Forum Mtg. in the Parish Hall

Saturday, Nov. 7
9-11 am Cemetery Work-Day at Solvang Cemetery, Chalk Hill Rd.

Sunday, Nov. 8
10:45 am Brown Bag Breakfast Packing - Parish Hall

Monday, Nov. 9
6-8 pm BLCW Card-Making

Wednesday Nov 11 - Veterans' Day
The Preschool & After School Program is closed

Thursday, Nov. 12
7-8:30 pm Theo Pub at Solvang Brewing Company

Friday Nov. 13
9 am -12:15 pm Quilting in the Parish Hall

Saturday Nov. 14
8 am - 1 pm A to Z Cooking Class in the Kitchen and Parish Hall
10 - 11 am Calendar Meeting in the Office

Sunday, Nov. 15
5:30 pm -8:00 pm Thanksgiving Potluck and Bingo in the Parish Hall

Wednesday, Nov. 18
10:30 am Audit Committee in the Office

Thursday, Nov. 19
6 pm-7:30 pm Council Meeting in the Fireside Room

Friday, Nov. 20
8 am - 4:30 pm Preschool Thanksgiving Feast in the Parish Hall
5 pm Set-Up for Grateful Goods Arts & Crafts Sale in the Parish Hall

Saturday, Nov. 21
Grateful Goods Arts & Crafts Sale in the Parish Hall, Fireside Room and Kitchen

Continued on the next page

Sunday, Nov. 22
Noisy Offering
10:45 am Annual Meeting, Pt. 1 - Parish Hall

Monday, Nov. 23
8:30 am -12:30 pm Piano Tuning in the Parish Hall and the Sanctuary
6 pm Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Los Olives

Thursday, Nov. 26 - Thanksgiving Day
The Church Office and Bethania Preschool and After School are closed as well as Friday, Nov. 27.

Saturday, Nov .28
10:00 am Set-up Advent Wreath in the Sanctuary

Sunday, Nov. 30
First Sunday of Advent

Connect in Prayer

Prayers to Keep throughout the Week

In addition to the prayers spoken aloud today, we request that you keep these friends and loved ones in your regular prayers throughout the week:

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

Connect with us

www.bethanialutheran.net
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bethanialutheranch@gmail.com

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Bethania Lutheran Church

Contact Info for
Linda Marzullo
688-5219, 688-3059 or
vikingpressprint@verizon.net

The Beacon November 2026
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