

The Beacon

Bethania Lutheran Church
805-688-4637
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December 2017

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Pastor Chris's Message

A Challenge

Well I'm back from paternity leave! Not like I really ever left. It's been amazing to spend so much time with Vesper and connect with her so young in her life in a way I don't think a lot of fathers get to. I'm so grateful to Bethania for giving me this time to be with her.

An additional benefit to my time on paternity is a renewed sense of responding to my call as your pastor in its many facets, as well as empowering all of us to respond to our call as the Church. I'm going to be spending the next few months focusing more on this call and seeking ways we can all be involved as a church. I'd like to start this with a challenge to all of us.

Recently a church member told me they came to Bethania because of Pastor Russ and stayed because of Pastor Chris. This was extremely meaningful to hear and was another of the many reasons I feel blessed to be your pastor. But after hearing this I thought to myself, what if this person had said they stayed because of the people at Bethania?

That's not to say they didn't feel this way; I think they were trying to lift me up in particular. However, I still want to use this as a challenge to all of us. I can see a lot from where I sit during our worship service. I know who our members are and I know when we have visitors. We have great ushers and wonderful greeters to welcome those visitors, but when they get past the narthex, I often see them come in and find a seat by themselves and try to navigate when to stand and when to sit and where to find the hymns, etc.

And I get why! When you come to church you come for your worship experience. That's your time to come and sit with God. However, I would like to challenge you all, every member of our church, to do both, have your time with God, and also extend an extra hand of welcome to our visitors. If you see someone you don't know and they've already been greeted by our ushers and our greeter, invite them to come sit with you, show them the hymnal, help them understand the bulletin, make sure they have a place to sit a feel comfortable, and invite them to join you for coffee after the service.

I know it's tough to go outside of our comfort zones and I know it takes courage to ask a person you don't know to join you, especially when worship can be intimate or vulnerable. But imagine being that visitor, either in town on vacation, or perhaps checking out our church for the first time. Imagine not knowing anyone and trying to be part of a service that we proclaim is communal. And then imagine what that person's experience would be like if they weren't just greeted by our team up front and our pastor, but also the whole church!

One thing I can promise is this: whether a person likes traditional or contemporary worship, whether they think the sermon is great or awful, whether they know how to sing or not, the thing that will stand out in their mind the most about a church experience is the level of welcome they receive, not from the pastor, but from the congregation. That one act alone will mean the world to someone visiting our church and that one act alone will keep people coming back more than anything else.

It seems small, but it's also a huge challenge. I recently gave a sermon about our talents and how their uses are most effective if we work together. This is a talent we can all strive for and it's a challenge I believe we can meet! Let us heed Christ's call and welcome the stranger together!

**Yours in Christ,
Pastor Chris Brown**

Ministry at Bethania

Youth and Family Ministry

Happy Holidays Bethania,

Confirmation will be meeting Sunday, Dec. 3 from 3-5 pm in our Fireside Room. I plan to spoil the kids with some holiday goodies! Please invite any middle schoolers who want to learn more about the Bible and one's path in faith. Confirmands are to help wrap presents at the Christmas Carol Wrap on Sunday, Dec. 17 during coffee hour.

I am pleased to announce we have a fantastic group of youth registered to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering next summer:

Sarah Puder
David Quiroga
Karli Lundberg
Eddie Lundberg
Vladimir McConnell
Lexi Hemming
Olivia Berman



Some of our youth met to discuss fundraisers to help get us to Houston, Texas next June. On Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018, we plan to host a RUMMAGE SALE along with our BOOK SALE. Please drop off your donated items on Thursday, Jan. 25 at 6 pm in the Parish Hall. Please share news of the sale with the community!

We still happily accept donations and we are grateful for any amount. Please address offering envelopes with "Youth Fund" in the "Other" category. Please make checks out to "Bethania Lutheran Church" and in the memo line please write "Youth Fund."

In Houston, we will participate in service learning projects, help empower Houston community partners to further their mission, and create a transformative experience for participants to return home and be agents of change in our community. It will be a great learning and faith building opportunity to be a part of and look back on.

Please let us encourage our efforts to promote our mission that all are loved.

Be kind and loving to one another,

Livier (Liv-EE-air) Ghamari-Brown

livierghamari@yahoo.com

[\(909\) 962-9366](tel:(909)962-9366)

Bethania Preschool & After School

If You Were ----

If you were a parent of one or more children, ages 3-12 and your husband abandoned your family, what would you do if your have job nets \$2,000, rent is \$1,000 and needed child care costs \$690/month? If you apply to Bethania Preschool & After School, our goal is to provide up to 50% of your tuition through our Tuition Assistance Fund and to do this for all qualified working families.

We need your contributions to our annual Christmas Greetings project to do this. Our goal this year is \$2,500 with a total budget of \$12,000. Your gifts will enable our church's year-round, high quality Preschool & After School to offer a helping hand to families through our Tuition Assistance program. Everyone benefits - children enrolled, the whole family, employers and our entire community.

How can I help? Please complete the form below, add your cash or check made out to either Bethania Lutheran or Bethania Preschool, put in the pew envelope and place in the offering plate at Worship. If unable to attend worship, please mail to: Bethania Preschool, 611 Atterdag Road, Solvang CA 93463.

P. S. We will include your name on the Christmas Greetings list in the Christmas Eve service bulletin and on name ornaments for the Parish Hall Christmas tree. Merry Christmas!

Christmas Greetings

Name(s) _____
(For ornament: ___ 1st & last name(s), ___ Mr & Mrs, or ___ Family)

Phone _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____.

Please make checks payable to:

Bethania Preschool & After School Deadline: Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017



Produce Table

Nov. 26 was the last Sunday for the Produce Table. At the end of this harvest season, we have had primarily persimmons and some other produce. Through your generosity, we have been able to gift \$2,000 to the ELCA Good Gifts (baby chicks, livestock, fruit trees, water wells, mosquito nets, etc.) together with the training to utilize these gifts! As of Nov. 26, you have donated almost \$1800 to assist with local needs, surpassing our goal of \$1,500! Thanks to our growers, buyers and assistants...we are blessed and I am truly grateful this Thanksgiving Season.

- Carolynn Petersen

Ministry in the Community and Around the World

Christmas Angels & Preschool Presents: Calling all Angels!

Would you like to be an "angel" to an impoverished child? Dust off your angel wings if you would be interested in helping to make Christmas special for a child this year.

Close to home, the **CHRISTMAS ANGEL** project helps the members of Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz by providing Christmas gifts for children in need. Iglesia is a mission start up church based at Bethel in Santa Maria, which serves the very poorest of the farm workers who often live in difficult circumstances. Oftentimes families share one bed or live in someone else's garage without heat or running water. Many of the children may not have shoes, warm clothing or enough to eat. Agricultural conditions, weather and the economy directly affect these hard-working families, especially during the winter months. *(The Noisy Offering on Dec. 17 will support donations of Food and any needed Christmas Angels additional purchases - see related article.)*

Even closer to home, the **PRESCHOOL PRESENTS** project helps to support local families who attend Bethania Preschool and After School program. These local families are chosen by Preschool Director Eileen Knotts. Your donations will assist us in purchasing gifts and other necessary items for local children, to help these families who require some assistance to make their child's Christmas special. If you would like to shop for a Preschool child or make a donation to this project, you can earmark it "Preschool Presents". *(This is a different donation from the Preschool Scholarship Fund.)*

"Angel Wish Lists" will be available around Dec. 1st or in the Parish Hall after the 9:30 service. We will have over 40 children to help this year, so please prayerfully consider helping in some way. If you are interested in sponsoring a child through the Christmas Angel or the Preschool Presents Projects, donations of any amount are welcome. If you would prefer to do the shopping on your own, or make a contribution of an item on a child's wish list, please let Linda Marzullo know. All of the children/families have specific needs and/or requests we are going to try to fulfill, based on their "wish lists". As soon as we receive the "wish lists" we will be able to coordinate meeting the children's needs. Contact Linda Marzullo if you would like to be an Angel and adopt a child through fulfilling their wish list.

We need willing hands and generous hearts to make these gifts happen and keep our funding through Thrivent. Would you consider enriching your holiday by helping others in need?

Our “Christmas Wrap” Party, when we package and wrap the gifts for the children while Carols are sung, will be held Dec. 17, and the gifts delivered to Iglesia in time for their Christmas Party. All hands are welcome!

Please contact Linda Marzullo with any questions at vikingpressprint@verizon.net, work 688-5219 or the church office.

Christmas Carol Wrap - Sunday, Dec. 17 **Following worship during coffee hour**

Bring yourself and your willing hands and singing soul. Everyone is welcome, whether you want to wrap, sing, have coffee and talk...we have lots of children to wrap presents for, and we need your help! We provide the paper, boxes and tape - you help do the wrapping of the gifts our Angels have purchased, and have some fun at the same time.

We will be enjoying Christmas music, coffee, fellowship and singing while we wrap gifts for children from Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz in Santa Maria (see related article). The gifts will be going to the children who have been sponsored through the Christmas Angel Project. All wrapped gifts will be delivered to Iglesia, in time for their Christmas party. All members of Bethania are invited to attend on Dec. 23. Call the church office for more details.



Sunday School children and confirmands are especially encouraged to come and help us out. We invite everyone to come and help WRAP up some gifts while we “RAP” to Christmas tunes and share some fun, while sharing the spirit of the Christmas!

For more information about this project or to help with delivery or gift purchases, contact the church office or Linda Marzullo at work 688-5219, cell 451-5548 or vikingpressprint@verizon.net.

Grief Group Meets on 3rd Mondays

A Grief Group gathers Monday, Dec. 18 at **5:15 pm** in the parlor at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church. The group is led by our very own **Anna Cook**. This group is particularly helpful especially when there are “firsts” without a loved one: “first” Thanksgiving, “first” Christmas, “first” anniversary. Please know that you are not alone. If you know of other friends and neighbors who are grieving, please invite them and go together. It helps to go together and share your feelings.

Food Drive Continues for Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz

You are invited to bring donations to the box in the Parish Hall to help the members of Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz. Iglesia is a mission start-up church based at Bethel Lutheran. We have become partners in their ministry and continue to support their work. Pastor Esteban Salazar and his wife Angie are very enthusiastic and have so many exciting plans to develop the scope and mission of Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz.

The people who attend Iglesia in Santa Maria are mainly field workers. Many of them are taken by buses early in the morning to fields hours away (such as Salinas) to work picking crops and then are bussed back home after dark. Because of this, Pastor Esteban has started a dinner program several times a week. He loves to cook, and so he cooks up huge meals in the kitchen at Bethel and delivers them to families who are struggling. Oftentimes, the parents will be gone all day working, and he will feed the whole family as part of his pastoral care. Angie has said that at many homes there is nothing to eat in the cupboards, and the parents are too exhausted after traveling to distant fields to pick all day to also go shopping. Pastor and Angie have also been making free lunch for field workers and bringing it to them in local fields as a ministry.

This past year we have been asked to contribute more regularly to their food needs than ever before, and we appreciate your kind and loving support of the food drive over these last months. Now we are entering the time of year when field work becomes less certain and their food insecurity is highest.

If you would like to contribute funds to this project and have us do the shopping, you can earmark your donation "IGLESIA FOOD" and drop it in the offering plate or at the church office. We encourage everyone to become more educated about families who are the "working poor" and who struggle every day to feed their families in our area. Items most needed at this time to re-stock the pantry for Iglesia families include:

- 5 lb. bags of white flour**
- 5 lb. bags of white rice**
- 3 lb. bags of Pinto beans**
- Canned chicken (no tuna, please!)**
- Canned Vegetables (Corn, Green Beans, Refried Beans, Peas, Mixed Vegetables)**
- Large cans of Hominy**
(very popular and relatively inexpensive if you watch for a sale)
- Canned Soups (Chicken Noodle or Beef)**
- Breakfast Cereal and Breakfast Bars**
- Toilet Paper**



- Peanut Butter / Jelly / Honey**
- Diapers (any size, age)**

Thank you for making a difference to people struggling in our area, and supporting other Christians involved in a young, vibrant mission church. Questions? Contact me at 688-3059 (home) or 688-5219 (work) or by email: vikingpressprint@verizon.net

-Linda Marzullo

Noisy Sunday: Making Change Count

The next “Noisy Sunday” is coming on Dec. 17. Our donations from the offering will be used to help provide food items for members at Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz, and fund any additional Angel Gifts needed for the children attending there (see *related article*).

What will our donations be used towards?

Donations on Noisy Sunday will help us purchase food items for families. The majority of the families at Iglesia work in the fields, and this time of year is difficult financially for them. Many children have nothing to eat at home, and depend on outside sources for their meals, such as school lunches. Families often share small apartments and even live in garages, with the entire family sleeping on the floor. We hope to help these families with gifts of food, diapers, laundry soap and gift cards for fresh produce and dairy items. If we have any Angel Gift children that have not been adopted, some of these funds will help provide them with warm clothing and a toy. Pastor Esteban and his wife Angie provide the “wish lists” for the children’s gift requests. Any amount donated, large or small, is much appreciated towards meeting these goals.

We all really “make change for the better” with the Noisy Sunday! So bring your coins and make some noise on Dec. 17. Together, we can **change** a child’s world!

Church Life

Halloween Party a Huge Success!



The Great Faulkini
“swallowing fire”

The annual Halloween Party was held on Saturday, Oct. 28 – and it was definitely super-sized! We had the largest attendance ever - over 250 kids, parents, friends and families. Our volunteers really stepped up and made the Parish Hall a magical place and made playing our carnival games so much fun that the kids just kept on coming. We had two bounce houses, popcorn, cotton candy, food, contests, games, crafts, fortune telling, photo area and so much fun. We ended the evening with a fantastic performance from “The Great Faulkini”, our very own Ken Faulk, master magician!

Volunteers of all types, talents and abilities helped to make our party for revelers large and small a fun and safe event. Donations of prizes, candy, pumpkins, cash and decor were much appreciated. We could not do this without our wonderful volunteers, who are too numerous to list! An extra big thank you to everyone who went above and beyond, especially: Livier Ghamari-Brown, Donna Hinsbeeck, Pastor Chris Brown, Caro Stinson, Brenda Knudsen, Alice Laufer, Betty Petersen, Glenda

Madrid, Mindi Christian, Lisa Kekuewa, Jasmine Day and Aria Riley, Josh Bratt and Cayden and Avi, Wendy Berry, Kristyl Downey and Sean, Andrew Nielsen, Donna Ineman, Don & Lois DeMeyer, Barbara Pedersen, Dominique Ghamari, Nancy Puder, Emily Abello, Bridget Cas-

sara, Fred & Nancy Emerson, Gene & Harriett Madsen, Lori McConnell, Denise Morris, Rick Marzullo, Annalisa Nearn, Bruce Pedersen, Tom Petersen, Lisa Hess, Janet Townsend, Jeanelle Needham, Owen and Nolan Andersen and Kurt Beehler...and so many more!

This is our biggest outreach to families with children during the year – thank everyone for your help in making this a huge success!

-Linda Marzullo

Bethania Book Group

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, Dec. 12 from 2:00-3:30 pm in the Parish Hall. We will begin reading **The Folly of God** by John Caputo, one of the two speakers for the Feb. 23-25, 2018 Farstrup-Mortensen Lectures. The title, taken from I Corinthians I:22-25, opens the door to a provocative introduction and 10 chapters about God in 148 pages.

Theo Pub

Theology “Jule” Pub will meet Thursday, Dec. 14 at 7 pm at the Solvang Brewing Company. Join Pastor Chris and friends for good beer, soda, food, cheer, and conversation.

Thumbnail Portrait - Theresa Strong and Alan Needham



Theresa and Alan had a life-changing experience in April 2014 when two of Alan's granddaughters came to live with them: Jeanelle and Alana, now thirteen and eight. Theresa looked for a Sunday school in Solvang; Bethania had the only one. The girls already knew Donna Hinsbeeck and settled in immediately. The girls asked Pastor Chris to baptize them, and in April 2015 they all became members of Bethania. Jeanelle sings in the choir, worked as a Vacation Bible School counsellor-in-training, and has served as an acolyte. She is a part of the current confirmation class and still finds time to help wash granddad's trucks. Alana attends Bethania's After School program and she is a regular at Sunday School.

Alan's The Valley Gardener company has 28 workers and several trucks. He has been busy for 41 years now; trucks are easy to find but he needs more workers. Theresa had a background in Human Resources in Santa Maria, and now handles the accounts and general office duties for Valley Gardener, when she can tear herself away from the granddaughters.

Alan was born in Yokohama Japan on an army base. Shortly after Alan was born his father contracted Polio & was transferred to Walter Reed in Washington DC and they moved to Richmond Virginia.

After his father passed five years later, Alan's mother, Alan, and older sister Susan moved to Seattle where they had family. His mother started working for the Boeing company and in the early 60's, they were transferred to Santa Maria to work at VAFB on the Minuteman Program. Alan joined the army after high school and served in a helicopter unit in maintenance & as a door gunner for the commanding officer.

Alan and Theresa met in October 1995 and have a combined family of three sons, two daughters, six granddaughters and one grandson, and one great-grandson. Daughter Kelly's son, James, was baptized by Pastor Chris in April 2017.

Theresa grew up in northern and central California where her father was a farmer and then a produce broker. Theresa was educated in Catholic schools and graduated from an all-girl school in Orange County. She worked in her dad's produce office for years, and strawberries brought her to the Central Coast.

Theresa likes to arrange vacations for Alan and herself; they like Carnival cruises from L.A. In October 2012 they enjoyed a river cruise from Moscow to St. Petersburg organized by the Solvang Chamber of Commerce. Next year, she and her daughter will visit Italy and hope to celebrate a mass given by the Pope.

Now they've been introduced, welcome them when you see them in the coffee hour!

- **Stewart Mee**

Gather Bible Study

The Gather Bible Study meets on Thursday, Dec. 21 at 10:30 a.m. in the Atterdag Lounge at Atterdag Village. It will be an Advent devotional, entitled "Joy to the World", based on Luke 2:9-14. This study is printed in the December "Gather" magazine, pages 24-28. Come and share how your family celebrates Christmas.

Poinsettias Available



Would you like a poinsettia to remember or honor someone or an occasion? Then, simply fill out this form and return it (with payment) to the church office. You'll get to make a dedication for the Little Christmas Eve and Christmas Eve bulletins. Each poinsettia is \$8.

I/We would like _____ # of poinsettias at \$8/each. (payment enclosed)

Given by _____ in honor of/ in memory of _____

Phone # _____



Christmas Time Worship Services

Little Christmas Eve - Dec. 23

6 pm Danish Service

Sunday, Dec. 24

9:30 am Worship Service

Christmas Eve - Dec. 24

4:00 pm Worship Service

6:00 pm Worship Service

11:00 pm Candlelight Service

Sunday, Dec. 31

9:30 am Worship Service

Elverhøj Museum of History and Art



The Elverhøj invites members and friends to celebrate the holiday season at the annual Members and Friends Christmas Party on Sunday Dec. 3, 5:30 to 8 pm.

The Museum glows during the holidays, with a 12 foot tree decorated with handmade Danish Christmas ornaments as the focal point. Live music and the Danish Christmas tradition of 'dancing' around the tree will once again be Christmas party highlights. The event includes an abundance of Danish specialty foods such as open-face sandwiches, homemade Christmas cookies, chocolates, and Christmas cheer. Guests will enjoy the Santa Ynez Master Chorale and the Mystique Girls' Choir. And of course, Santa Claus (and maybe even a Nisser or two) will stop by with treats for the kids.

5:30 to 7:00 pm - Santa Claus and Nisse friend

6:30 pm Santa Ynez Valley Master Chorale Holiday concert preview

7:15 pm Mystique Girls' Choir

Serving as a backdrop for the Party will be the Eyvind Earle Exhibit "Winter." Guests will enjoy many of the classic serigraphs and illustrations used in his popular line of Christmas and Holiday cards.

Admission to the Christmas Party is \$10. There is no charge for children ten and under.

Solvang Danish Sisterhood Lodge #177

Is Proud To Present Again This Year Their



**Traditional Family
Danish Christmas Dinner
Sunday, Dec. 10th (5:30 to 8:00 pm)
Parish Hall**

A traditional Danish Meal will be served including Dessert from Olsen's bakery, along with singing carols around the Christmas tree, visit from Santa, and many handcrafted items for sale in the holiday craft boutique.

Doors open at 5:30 pm with dinner served at 6:00 pm

Dinner Cost \$10 Adult and \$5 (Children 10 and under)

Please extend an invitation to anyone who may be interested.

Reservations are encouraged by Dec 7th because space is limited.

Can contact Donna Andersen Ineman 805-705-2118 or email The Home Connection home.connection@verizon.net

Glaedelig Jul og Haaber Vi Ses Der!

Congregational Business

Council Highlights from Nov. 16, 2017

- Council approved a recommendation from the Endowment Committee for funding several mission outreach programs using their earned income from 2016. These programs include:
 - College scholarships for students
 - An additional gift to Iglesia Luterana
 - A gift to Santa Ynez Valley Goleta Hospital Foundation
 - Fund the commitment to Middle Circle
 - A gift to Rancho Alegre to assist with rebuilding
 - A gift to Circle V Ranch Camp to assist with rebuilding
 - A gift to Bethania Preschool/After School to refurbish bark for the playground.
- Council approved the request by Pastor Chris Brown to have the week of Thanksgiving off, as he has worked several days during his leave.
- Council approved the slate of nominees for Congregational Council for 2018.
- A lengthy discussion was held concerning the current financial position of Bethania and how to address it. Ron Walsh reported that we currently have about an \$18,000 deficit 10 months into this year.
- The date of the December Council meeting was changed to Tuesday, Dec. 19 in order for everyone to attend. The meeting will be held at Robin Gehrs home.

Marilyn Larsen, Council Secretary

Treasurer's Report October 2017 Financial Statement

Balance Sheet:

- The cash position is at the lowest point in the year, \$3,394 at the end of October. This is well below the threshold of \$10,000 that we feel is comfortable and necessary to meet unforeseen expenses.
- The money market fund is stable at \$93,298. It is entirely possible that we will need to move funds from this account to the general checking account before the end of the year to meet payroll and expenses.
- Our fund accounts (Endowment, Cemetery, and Heritage funds) remain strong with a combined value of \$1,688,617.
- The fixed assets of the church are \$1,804,405. The combined assets of the church are \$3,493,022.
- All liabilities are current.

Profit & Loss Budget Performance:

Income:

- Offerings for the month were \$1,483 below the budget (\$16,484 compared to \$17,968 budgeted).
- Facilities use receipts continue to be strong with \$12,075 income for the year to date compared to \$8,500 budgeted for the entire year.
- Total income for the month was \$21,746 compared to a budget of \$21,717.
- Total income for year to date is \$223,376 compared to \$227,422 budgeted. We are at 98% of total income year to date.

Expenses:

- Salary & benefits for the month were \$15,241 compared to \$15,274; for the first 10 months we are at 103% of budget (\$156,540 compared to \$152,334 budgeted).
- Staff expenses for the month were under budget and are at 83% of budget for the year to date.
- Office administration is 81% of budget for the first 10 months, and is under budget for the month of October.
- Property expenses are below budget for the month, but are over budget at 106% for the first 10 months.
- Utilities for the month are \$315 over budget for the month, but are at 96% of budget for the first 10 months.
- Christian Education is below budget for the year.
- Outreach expenses are at 142% of budget. However, that is due to the printing of additional historic brochures for the church and pew rack cards. There are enough printed to last us well into 2018.
- Worship & music expenses are up due to the purchase of the projector and screen for the Sanctuary. However, those expenses will be moved to the balance sheet and out of operations.
- Overall our expenses are at 102% compared to 98% of income, leaving us with a deficit of \$18,868.

Overall: If we are to close this budget deficit, it will require all of us to search our hearts as to how we can financially respond to God's calling for the ministry here at Bethania. God has richly blessed us, to Him be the glory and honor.

Additional Information: As of the middle of November, we were able to pay all our bills and payroll (as we do every two weeks). However, we were left with a balance of \$9.97 in the church's general checking account. This is the lowest amount we have ever had in recent memory. But God does provide, as we were able to make all these payments. As we go through the last six weeks of the year, please be sure to bring your offerings up to date (if you have missed any weeks, and consider a year end gift to Bethania).

God bless you all for all you do and give.

Ron Walsh, Treasurer

On Year End Giving

"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, for God loves a cheerful Giver."
2 Corinthians 9:7

Most of us have been told this since our days in Sunday School. We want to give and need to give gladly. A spirit of generosity isn't enough to guide us in our decisions. What else does Scripture have to say on the subject?

Offerings and Tithing

"On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come." 1 Corinthians 16:2

The faith practice of making a regular financial offering to our Church is grounded in a "first fruits" philosophy.

We might think of this giving as "business as usual." You may pay rent or a mortgage, buy groceries, and you contribute regularly to help carry out God's mission in the world. Your generosity isn't an afterthought; it's part of your day-in-and day-out joyful response as a child of God.

These offerings first help to support Bethania's local ministries, outreach and more. Our congregation then shares a portion of your offering – mission support – with our synod and the ELCA church body as a whole.

Many Christians talk about their regular contribution as a tithe. This helps us to differentiate between our financial commitment to Bethania and the special offerings we may designate to specific causes, such as world hunger, Iglesia support, heritage fund, or endowment funds.

As a congregation, we encourage your designated support of these worthy causes. But we recommend that these offerings are given above and beyond, and never in place of your commitment to your regular offering to Bethania.

Alms

"Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys" Luke 12:33

Alms are our compassionate, heartfelt response to the people Jesus mentioned in Matthew 25: those "least" of our brothers and sisters who are "less" than we are in circumstance only and always our equal in their humanity.

This is our most personal and spontaneous kind of giving in response to people in need. Think about the homeless people in our communities who live on the streets, or in creek beds or people in our own congregation who struggle with financial issues, or are in difficult times emotionally and physically. Your outreach makes God's love for them feel very real and very immediate; your kindness reveals Christ's presence within them as well.

Time and Talent

It's also important to remember that when we focus exclusively on giving in terms of money alone, we lose sight of the bigger picture. God calls us to be generous in all areas of our lives

and invites us to explore the many opportunities to share ourselves through our time and talent.

When we ground our giving in a biblical context, our financial generosity becomes an expression of our love for God, for our neighbor, and for ourselves. We are new people in Christ: compassionate and eager to share. We give cheerfully because God has given us so much.

As we approach the year end, we ask that you prayerfully consider your response to God's blessings that He has bestowed on you. We encourage you to join our Church Council in giving an additional gift to the Lord, *"for God loves a cheerful giver"*

- Ron Walsh

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting, pt. 1 will take place in the Parish Hall Sunday, Dec. 3, 2017 after the 9:30 worship service. The 2018 congregational budget and elections of Council Members will take place. The budget will be available on the counter in the narthex or in the church office before the meeting.

In Our Hearts, In Our Prayers

Family and loved ones of Richard Lindekens - Richard died Nov. 9.

The service in tribute to his life was Nov. 18 here at Bethania.

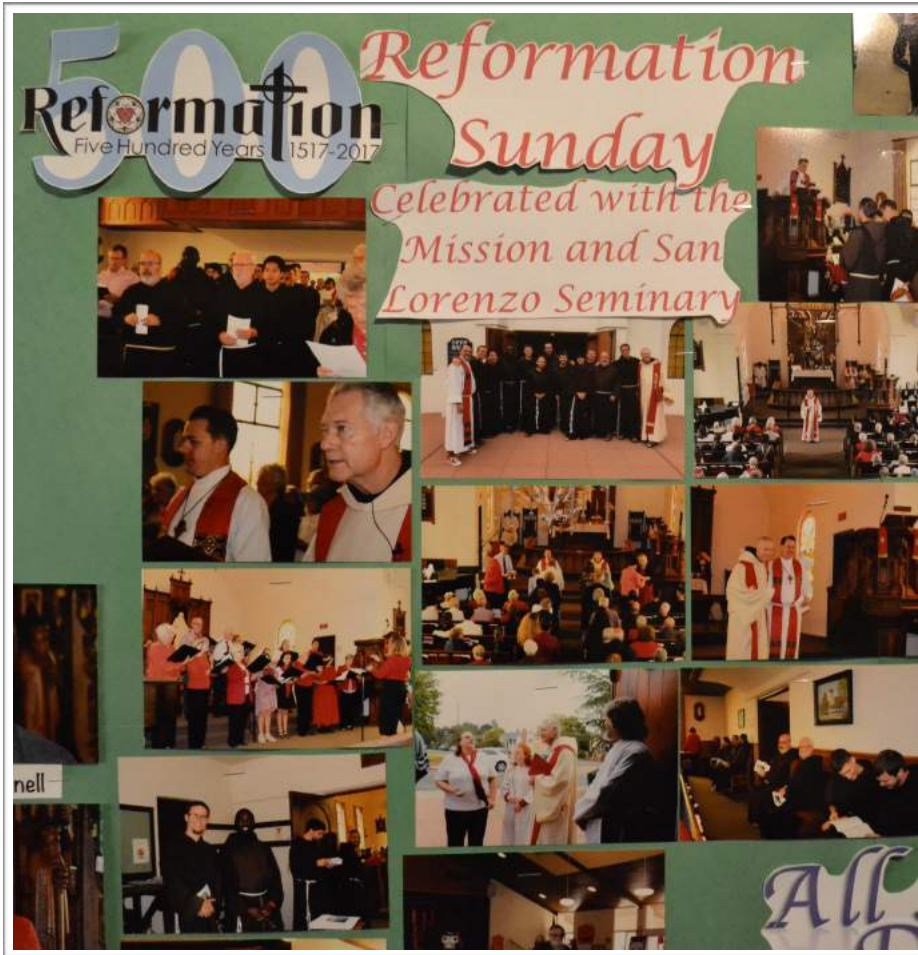
Family and loved ones of Chris Roed - Chris died Nov. 6.

The service remembering and celebrating his life was Dec. 2 here at the church.

Immediate Prayer Concerns: Brianna Ceballos, Denise Chaboya, Kathy Hackler, Steve Logan, Lance & Jonathan Poldberg

Other Prayer Concerns: Robin Adkins, Lee Aulman, Baby Leo (Iglesia Luterana), Joe & Pat Bode, Barbara Boyd, John Camp, Dan Cassara, Annette Clausen, Mary Conners, Caylin, Katy & Kay Corlee, Dolores Dederding, Niels Djaernes, George Eckman, Terri Elwess, Armando Franco, Chris Frederiksen, Debbie Fritts, Dolores Gehrs, Chris Gideon, Pat Green, Sharon, Sarah & Casey Harris, Michael Jech, Robert & Gail Jennings, Berdella Johnson, Steve Johnstone, Chris Kaping, Barbara Kargard, Kim Kenton, Kate Knotts, Duane Lambertson, Stephanie Larrabee, Ethel Litwiler, Betsy Logan, Rick Marzullo, Brian Merrick, Denise Morris, Roger Myers, Helen Nielsen, Marie Ostertag, Marc & Laurie Owens, Edith Plam, Doyle Phillips, Audrey Robinson, Edna Robbers, Jean & Bill Stelling, Carol Summit, Dave & Theresa Tannascoli, Clay Tremblay-McGaw, Tina Walen, Alisha & Anna Marie Wilson and Robert Workman

Photo Album (Thanks to Marilyn Larsen & Livier Ghamari-Brown for the pictures)



Reformation Collage



Reformation Coffee



Bat Family - Livier, Chris & Vesper



Youth at Boomers



December 2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wedn'day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
CH = Church PH = Parish Hall FR = Fireside Room	BPSAS = Preschool & AfterSchool	OFC = Office	SME = St. Mark's Episcopal Church	AV = Atterdag Village of Solvang	1	2 11 am Service for Chris Roed:CH
3 9:30 am Worship: CH 11 am Annual Mtg, pt. 1:PH 3 pm Confirmation: FR 5 pm Sunday School: FR 5 pm Evening Worship: CH	4 6:30 pm Tai Chi:PH 7 pm Worship & Music Cmt:OFC 8 pm AA: FR	5 11:30 am Chapel: CH 7 pm Christian Ed Mtg: OFC	6 3:30 Chapel: CH 7 pm Choir:FR	7 12 noon-2 pm Jodi House Group:PH 1:30 pm Preschool Board Mtg:PH	8	9 Craft Show:PH & FR
10 9:30 am Worship: CH 5 pm Sunday School: OFC 5:30 pm Danish Sisterhood Dinner:PH 5 pm Evening Worship: CH	11 6:30 pm Tai Chi:PH 8 pm AA: FR	12 11:30 am Chapel: CH 2 pm Book Group: PH 7 pm Preschool Program:PH	13 12:45 pm Quilting/ Sewing: PH 3:30 Chapel: CH 7 pm Choir:FR	14 12 noon-2 pm Jodi House Group:PH 5:45 pm Touch- a-Truck:FR 7 pm Theology Pub: Solvang Brewing Co.	15 5:30 pm SYV Jewish Communi- ty Hanukkah Party:PH	16 2:30 pm Guitar Concert: CH Set-up for Christmas Wrap:PH
17 9:30 am Worship & Noisy Offering: CH 11 am Xmas (W)Rap: PH 5 pm Evening Worship: CH 5 pm Sunday School: FR	18 9am Piano Tuning 9:30 am Staff Mtg: OFC 5:15 pm Grief Group: SME 6:30 pm Tai Chi: PH 8:00 pm AA: FR	19 11:30 am Chapel: CH 7 pm Council Mtg: R.Gehrs' home	20 Beacon Deadline	21 10 am Communion: AV 10:30 am Gather Bible Study:AV	22 The Church Office will be closed. BPSAS closes at 3 pm.	23 6 pm Little Christmas Eve Service:CH
24 Christmas Eve 9:30 am Worship: CH 4 pm Service:CH 6 pm Service: CH 11 pm Service: CH	25 Christmas Day 8:00 pm AA: FR	26	27	28	29	30
31 9:30 am Worship:CH						

THE BEACON
December 2017

Bethania Lutheran Church
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www.bethanialutheran.net

Preschool/After School
(805)688-7077
bethaniaps@verizon.net

Pastor: Chris Brown
Office Manager: Kristyl Downey
Preschool/After School Director:
Eileen Knotts
Director of Youth & Family:
Livier Ghamari-Brown

Church Council:
Pastor Chris Brown
President: Robert Laufer
Vice-President: Ken Faulk
Treasurer: Ron Walsh
Secretary: Marilyn Larsen
Robin Gehrs
Barbara Kargard
Kevin McConnell
Ann Tucker

Sunday Schedule
9:30 am Worship
5:00 pm Worship
5:00 pm Sunday School

Christmas Services

Dec. 23 Little Christmas Eve
Danish Service 6 pm

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve
4 pm Service
6 pm Service
11 pm Candlelight Service