

The Good NewsBreak

Evangelical News of Bethany Lutheran Church
A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

We **INVITE** all; We **GROW** in faith; We **GO** to share God's love and grace.

Volume 18, Issue 1

www.bethanyricelake.org • 715-234-9028

January 2018



Sunday, January 7 from 9:00-9:55 a.m.

Welcome back to Sunday school! We hope everyone had a wonderful and blessed Christmas break and now it's time to start the new year with a bash! Please join us for fun, wintery games and prizes!

Confessions of a Norwegian Reality Show Contestant

Some of you may have heard rumors that Pastor Grant was once a participant on a Norwegian "reality television" show. Those rumors are true! On Wednesday, January 3, Pastor Grant will talk about and show video segments from the first season of "Alt for Norge," a popular and award-winning show in Norway. Come to the Gathering Room at 5:30 p.m. for pizza and fellowship. Pastor Grant's presentation will begin at 6:00 p.m. and the public is invited (so bring a friend!)

A follow-up discussion of the presentation (for adults only) will be held at the Beer Cheese Bar & Grill (North Main) as part of Pastor Grant's monthly "Tapping into Faith" discussion group. A shorter version of his presentation will be given at the CrossTalk adult forum at 9:10 a.m. on Sunday, January 7.



Happy New Year from the staff at Bethany!

Pastor Grant, Pastor Luci, Amy Brekke, Angie Buchli, Dawn Paul, Leah Hullinger and James Balkum

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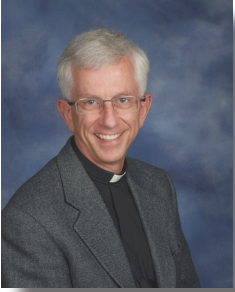


Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 28, 2018 - 9:00 a.m.

Annual Report Deadline: Tuesday, January 2, 2017

A Message from Pastor Grant



Remember Your Baptism!

“They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.” Psalm 1:3

When it comes to purchasing a home (so I have been told), there are three important factors to consider: location, location and location. That may be an overstatement, but the neighborhood you live in can significantly impact your home’s value, as well as your quality of life.

In northwestern Wisconsin, homes located by water are highly valued. In arid climates, like Arizona and Israel, the availability and proximity of water can make all the difference between a life-supporting community and a desert “wasteland.” As the author of Psalm 1 noted, trees planted near a stream tend to grow and prosper, while those with a less fortunate location tend to wither and die.

The same conditions apply to our spiritual health. As a Christian, your relationship with God was firmly “planted” in the life-giving waters of Holy Baptism. Martin Luther recommended that Christians return to the waters of baptism on a daily basis, to remind ourselves that we are beloved children of God whose sins have been washed away.

Human beings, of course, are not trees. We have the ability to change our location. We have the ability to drift away from the waters that renew, revive and restore our souls. So what can we do about this? As a colleague of mine once counseled, “If you find your soul is drying up, stand under the waterfall”—the waterfall of God’s grace. In other words, put yourself in a place where your soul is sure to be watered and fed. Daily devotions, weekly worship and honest conversations with caring Christian friends can be a good place to start.

Location matters. Trees can’t choose where they spend their time, but people can. In this new year, resolve to become spiritually healthy. Resolve to become more deeply rooted in God’s life-giving Word. Come often to the Lord’s Table. Plan to join a small group Bible study. Put yourself in places where your spirit is sure to be watered and fed.

In Christ,
Pastor Grant Aaseng

The Hebrew Bible in Today’s World: Why the Old Testament Still Matters

The rhythm of the study will be a five-week commitment starting early January and ending before Ash Wednesday. You will have the entire week to study on your own time. The provided guided materials should take approximately 60-90 minutes. Then we will come together for one evening discussion using an app, Zoom, for an hour each week. This “gathering” will be similar to Skype or Facetime which means you can attend Bible Study from anywhere you have WiFi by using your smartphone, tablet or computer!

This session we will be looking at the stories of Abraham to Joseph and how they still impact our lives and the world today. This is an ideal small group for anyone who needs to stay home with young children in the evenings or anyone who travels to warmer areas for the winter months.

If you are interested in participating in this session, let Pastor Luci know by December 24.

Missed the 11-11 Fiesta?

The special *Foundation for the Future* stewardship presentation that was given on November 11 can be watched by clicking on the “Future Foundation Fiesta” video under the “Live Streaming” section on Bethany’s website: bethanyricelake.org. If you have not yet returned your 2018 *Foundation for the Future* commitment card as well as an updated “Time and Abilities” survey, please do that as soon as possible. Thank you!

WORSHIP & MUSIC

“O Come, let us sing to the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!” Psalm 95:1

Annual Meeting

Bethany's Annual Meeting will be held between services (starting at approximately 9:05 a.m.) on Sunday, January 28 in the Sanctuary. An important agenda item will be the approval of the 2018 budget, as we commit to supporting a ministry that is Faithful, Vibrant and Sustainable. We will also elect four new church council representatives, three new members of the Bethany Trust Fund and delegates to the Synod Assembly (June 2-3, 2018) where a new bishop will be elected. Copies of the 2017 Annual Report will be available on Sunday, January 14. Due to the limited time frame for the Annual Meeting, any new business you wish to have considered must be submitted to Council President, Tina Henningsen, no later than January 7. An open forum on the 2018 proposed budget will be held on Sunday, January 21 at 9:10 a.m. in the Conference Room.

The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus

Lent is right around the corner and we have already started planning our Lenten Theme. Join us throughout Lent for **The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus**. The weekly themes of:

- Baptism and Temptation
- The Healing Ministry
- Proclaiming the Kingdom
- Calming the Storm
- Sinners, Outcast and the Poor
- The Final Week

will be our focus in weekend worship, Wednesday Lenten services and CrossTalk. More information will be coming. There are additional resources that accompany the study, if you wish to purchase them. **HOWEVER**, Additional materials are **NOT** required to fully engage in this series.

NURSING HOME COMMUNION SERVICES

The third Thursdays of every month, the ministry team heads to local Nursing Homes and Assisted Living to provide a communion service for the residents. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact the church office.



For This Month:

Thursday, January 18
11:15 a.m. Heritage Lakeside
1:00 p.m. Brentwood Assisted Living

Pastoral Acts

Baptism

Jordy Kristine Musil

Funerals

Erland Anderson
Leona Frommader
Carla Radtke

Green Team



In December and through February, the Green team is collecting used strings of Christmas lights.

Also, the Green Team is **ALWAYS** collecting AA, AAA, C, D and 9 volt batteries for recycling.



WORSHIP & MUSIC

“O Come, let us sing to the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!” Psalm 95:1



Join Dave Henningsen and friends between services in the Gathering Room for our adult education class, *CrossTalk*.

Beginning at 9:10 a.m., friends share recent God sightings and hear/discuss areas of interest in a warm, Christ-centered environment. Grab a cup of coffee and check it out!



GOD PAUSE

LUTHER SEMINARY

Did you know we publish daily God Pause devotions on Bethany's website? God Pause devotions are short, meaningful reflections on the following Sunday's lessons and Gospel. By Sunday, you'll be ready for an extra meaningful worship experience!

Mission Moments

from the
Stewardship Committee

"Sing unto him, sing praises unto him; tell of all his wondrous works!" --Psalm 105:2

Bethany is blessed with wonderful music. The Bethany bell choirs, individual members and the Bethany Choir add enrichment to our church services.



Dear Friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

The year was 1986 and it was a beautiful December morning in our new home in Minnesota. We had recently moved and I was preparing my Christmas Eve message for my new congregation. But I was having difficulty focusing on the task at hand. Each time I attempted to pen relevant and impressive thoughts, my eyes were diverted to a photo on my desk; a photo of a baby with thick dark hair and deep brown eyes. Although we had never met, she had been named and she was loved.

Her name was Laura and Lutheran Social Services had assured us that she would soon be on a plane that would fly her from Seoul, South Korea to the Minneapolis airport and then into our arms. But for now, she was in a crib in an orphanage in a faraway land. And that made me sad...

I was sad because this little one would spend her first Christmas alone... or as alone as one can be in a room filled with cribs. But she would not be held in the arms of loving parents and surrounded with gifts. And that was sad. And it made me feel alone.

But I had a sermon to write... so back to the words in my Bible and back to the story they told.

"Immanuel" - God with us. This word is first written in the book of Isaiah and then again in the Gospel of Matthew. Both times it is written as a promise that God will be with us, and God will never leave us. It is a promise that a baby will one day be born and that baby will fulfill the promise of God's presence with God's people.

Oh my goodness...could this be true? Could God's promise not be an ancient one, but one that was being fulfilled, even as I attempted to write a message of hope to my new people? Is God really with us?

Her first Christmas; wrapped in cloths and lying in a hard bottomed crib in the center of a faraway orphanage. And God is with her. God had knit her together in her mother's womb and God would never leave her. And her name was Laura. And she was a child of God.

I remember this beautiful December morning often. I remember it when I am feeling alone. I remember it because I need to believe that God is with me. And that God will never leave me. And I believe it.

This will be my last Christmas message to you as your bishop. Next year at this time, you will read words from a new bishop but the promise will not change. God is with you. His name is Immanuel and the promise is real.

Have a blessed Christmas and... go to church! God will be there!

Happy 2018 to everyone! Our Bethany women were very busy last year with so many amazing projects and events. We thank everyone for their generous support of these programs during the year. It is amazing to see the gathering of all the mission projects created during the year from stacks of quilts, to newborn quilts, dresses for Malawi, school kits, rolled bandages, sewing kits, boxes of soap and many others. The women of Bethany spend many, many hours preparing these gifts to be shared around the world in mission concerns.

Our kitchen is used by many during the year as we prepare and serve funerals, Advent and Lent luncheons plus others meals that are served. Please take a moment to make sure it is cleaned well and ready for the next group who will be using it.

It was awesome that so many of our women attended the Triennial Convention in Minneapolis this summer. It was a very rewarding experience for them. Our WELCA Christmas Luncheon was a big success and we thank Gail and Paulette for all their planning and the amazing work crews that helped set up, serve and clean up. We were able to give to the Rice Lake Food Pantry \$550.00 thanks to our very generous free will offering givers. A special thank you to Culvers for again donating our coleslaw for the luncheon, to Lehman's for allowing us to use their linen napkins and to our wonderful women who shared their favorite Christmas table decorations to make our tables more festive.

The WELCA Board thanks Marlene Thurs for her many years of dedicated service as our leader, guide and mentor. May she happily enjoy her retirement knowing she has turned her leadership over to two very capable ladies – Paulette Hanson and Gail Weber as co-leaders! Blessings to all in the New Year!



Mission Jamaica

Time has flown! In six short packed weeks, we will be in Jamaica with the kids and staff at WestHaven or building a J'Abode home! It's hard to believe the difference from here to there. It begins, of course, with weather. It's in the 80s there every day with lots of sun. The difference in other ways is just as stark.

The family for whom we'll build a J'Abode house, lives in a termite infested house that is not safe. Their floor sags about eight inches in the middle. The family sleeps along the walls.

I spoke with Carlinton a week ago. Carlinton is a young man who has become very close to us and is severely handicapped and living on his own. Some of you may remember that we sold his coloring books several years ago. While I was putting away my bags of groceries, he said all he had in his cupboard were two roaches and some fresh water. He has no gas to cook with and no food to cook. Don't get me wrong; he does NOT call and beg or complain. It was simply a statement he made.

The Team from here, this year, will be taking down some material donations but also lots of cash. We will make sure it gets spent wisely and we thank you all for any donations made! I have a feeling that part of that cash will go for protein supplements for the kids at WestHaven.

WHAT WE DO DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE! Does thinking about the people we meet down there depress me? Of course. I know many of the kids and adults personally. At the same time, I feel deep gratitude for the gifts God has bestowed on me. Knowing the Jamaicans and appreciating their uniqueness and joy never fails to make me smile. Consider joining the team for 2019 to see for yourself where the donations go and what it's like there. Any questions, contact Lenae & Dave Sovacool.

Hello, my name is:

LONG
FORGOTTEN

Forgot your name tag? Or are you visiting and don't have a name tag? No problem! We now have temporary name tags available in the Narthex. They are erasable and reusable. Just fill one out, wear it for the day and then return it at the end of the service. Name tags are a great way to address people by name and help others remember your name.

Memorials & Gifts

December Radio Broadcasts

In Honor of, and with a big thank you to, our amazing volunteers

By: Reaching Out

In Honor of Special Friends Kay Dahlgren, Janie Riggs, Dorothy Veit and Phyllis Tappon

By: Naomi Circle

In Memory of Charlie & Juanita Peterson

By: Joe & Anita Loge

December Altar Flowers

In Memory of Marvin Olson, who passed away nine years ago on Christmas Eve

By: Edith Olson & Family

Flower Garden

In Memory of Erland Anderson

By: Bill & Gail Weber

In Memory of Eva Miller

By: Marie Anderson

Mortgage Fund

In Memory of Eva Miller

By: Mark & Cindy Nymo

WELCA Fund

In Memory of Eva Miller

By: Emmett & Jean Engstrom

By: Danny & Carol Johnson

General Fund

In Memory of Erland Anderson

By: Ken & Alexa Gonske

Memorial Fund

In Memory of Erland Anderson

By: William & Lucille Gargulak

By: Kerwin & Marilyn Cordes

Radio Fund

In Memory of Erland Anderson

By: Tom McGiffin

In Memory of Steve Kochel

By: Shirley Peterson

Christmas Dinner Fund

In Memory of Carla Radtke

By: Herman & Judy Friess

Hospitality Fund

In Memory of Eva Miller

By: Bob & Carol Stanonik

Thank You Notes

Thank you for the many expressions of kindness we experienced during the Christmas holiday season! It is a privilege to serve among such generous and caring people. ~ The Bethany Staff

Special thanks to our Bethany family and friends in the community - your jars of soup, cartons of all kinds of good food stuffs, the get well cards and the love that came with those gifts and the knowledge that you were, and are, keeping us in prayer - we are overwhelmed! In my "trip" down the stairs - no broken bones, minimal skin breaks and no internal bleeding - in short: a miracle! I tumbled down 13 steps in the dark and ended up sitting on step number 13!

I am recovering slowly, but showing good progress with healing bumps, massive bruising and muscle pulls around the rib cage. We have home care from the hospital - and we have God watching over all of us! Blessings - Philip & Regina Mueller

(P.S. We have a beautiful collection of food containers - come! visit! and retrieve your "mercy jars!" Psalm 121 and Isaiah 43:1)

A huge thank you for all you do for the We Share Food Pantry. You provide volunteers to help us staff during open hours, regular food collections and monetary donations, your youth food drive, the Thanksgiving food offering, our male delivery truck unloaders and continued financial support. The need is greater than ever and we can help because you help. ~Renee, We Share Food Pantry

Thank you for your prayers. I'd just love to say how wonderful it is to have our Bethany family praying for Emily - and how powerful it is to feel the love and support of everyone - and that it works! She is doing wonderfully. ~Annie Antonson

Thank you for all the donations to the Family House Warming Shelter. They are so very helpful!



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Beth Brown.....Vice President
Roger Martin.....Secretary
Wendy Markgren.....Treasurer
Craig Antonson
Julie Bever
Rachel Engel
Chick Feather
Carol Hakala
Jim Kusilek
Jennifer Nelson
John Osterloth
Dave Wilson

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Carol Hakala - Council Rep.

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Amy Brekke - Staff Rep.
Angie Buchli - Staff Rep.

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Mary Ann Pebler, Shirley Peterson,
Dave Sovacool, Lenae Sovacool,
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John Dahlgren, Dave Hildebrand,
Larry Passint, Melissa Tomesh,
Stefani Fiedler - Advisor

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Paulette Hanson 715-234-4919
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Julie Bever - Council Rep.

Worship & Music

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Joan Gerland, Marla Koob,
Kristine Longmire, Tim Schnacky,
Royal Stokes, Nancy Vrieze
Amy Brekke - Staff Rep.
Pr. Grant Aaseng - Staff Rep.
Pr. Luci Sesvold - Staff Rep.

Announcements & Opportunities



CHURCH HEALTH TEAM January 2018 Update

Small Group Success Stories

Through the years 2015-2017, the Church Health Team delved into study, research, planning and embarked on a concentrated effort to make Bethany a “healthier” congregation. The area of study in which to improve for 2017 was SMALL GROUPS.

Tapping Into Faith - an evening for couples or singles, meeting the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the White Stag Tap (balcony level), 208 North Main, Rice Lake, to ponder life’s big questions. This 1.5 hour session requires no homework, guarantees a lively discussion and welcomes new people at any time.

Online Bible Study, “*The Hebrew Bible in Today’s World: Why the Old Testament Still Matters*,” is a new small group led by Pastor Luci. For all those who like new technology and innovative methods of study, this is the group for you! Anyone with a computer, tablet or smartphone can connect to the class through a password-protected site. Approximately eight people question, review and discuss with all the other participants as well as see and hear one another online. To participate, contact Pastor Luci at 715-234-9028.

Connecting Through Stories - This small group is like a book club, reading a selected book, meeting to discuss it and in the process, making new friendships. The excitement of this small group is that in ONE year it has reached its capacity! Now with twenty interested people, the group will divide. Beginning in January, Connecting Through Stories/Evening will meet on the fourth Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. and Connecting Through Stories/Morning will meet on the fourth Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. For more information contact Bea Evans at 715-246-9353.

KnitTogether - meets every second Tuesday from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the Narthex. Knitting for a purpose, the knitters make Prayer Shawls, Baptism Blankets, Prayer Squares and Hospice Comforters. No reservations are needed. Come to learn and KnitTogether!

FOOD PANTRY NEWS

Bethany’s monthly collection for the We Share Food Pantry is January 6-7, 2018. They are especially in need of cereal, clean grocery bags and peanut butter. Please bring nonperishable items with you to worship.



DEADLINES

- The deadline for the **February 2018 NewsBreak** is *Monday, January 15*.
- The deadline for bulletin announcements is on Tuesdays.
- All your articles **MUST** be in the church office on these dates as it is important that we have enough time and room to fit everything into the *Good NewsBreak* and bulletins.

Offering Update

Offering Update as of November 30, 2017

Fund	Amt Budgeted to Date	Amt Rec’d to Date	Expenses to Date	Deficit/ Surplus
General	\$ 624,794.38	\$ 527,842.89	\$ 613,051.44	\$ -40,208.55
Mortgage	\$ 67,530.00	\$ 85,198.46	\$ 67,530.00	\$ 17,668.46

Thank you for your participation in and support of the life and mission of Bethany Lutheran!

Worship Participants for December 16 & 17, 2017

5:30 p.m. Saturday

Host/Hostess: Barb Goffin
Song Leader: Paul Hanson

Projection: Jill Newhouse
Piano: Tammy Roberg

8:00 a.m. Sunday

Greeters: Shirley Bergthold (M)
Bob & Kathryn Damaske (N)

Ushers: Randy & Peggy Norton
Reader: Shirley Bergthold

Communion Assistants: Ione Gohl
and Bob & Kathryn Damaske
Acolytes: Alyssa McCullough and Alexa Robarge

Projection: Jan Wilking
Media: Wayne Arntson
Organ: Susan Barta

Assisting Minister for Sunday: Bun Hanson

10:00 a.m. Sunday

Greeters: Nicole Kohel, Jim Draganowski (M)
and Mark & Cindy Nymo (N)

Ushers: Ken & Alexa Gonske
Projection: Jan Wilking

Communion Assistants: Joan Gerland
and Mark & Cindy Nymo

Media: Dave Wilson
Bus Driver: Audrey Kusilek

Acolytes: Jacob Pearson
and Kallahan Bowman

Bus Aid: Joan Bird
Piano: Amy Brekke

Altar Flowers

If you would like to donate flowers as an offering to God from your flower garden for the Altar, please call the church office at 715-234-9028 to reserve a Sunday.



Bethany Cares

The C.A.R.E. Team reaches out to members in need of a little help. If you know someone with a temporary need, please contact the church office at 715-234-9028 so we can help.

How about expanding our Prayer Chain Ministry to include a separate list? People who prefer to e-mail their "Prayer Warriors" so no one will be missed! Just e-mail the church office (bethany@chibardun.net) and sign up with your e-mail addresses today. Let's bring more "pray-ers" together via the computer and touch lives in this way. Pray for the cares, concerns and needs of people "on line." Sign up today and share your gift of time!



When Your Address Changes

Whenever you're moving or changing to "temporarily away" with the USPS, any mail Bethany sends to you is returned at a cost per item. Please let Bethany know when your address, email address or phone number is changing. Email new information, send Bethany a USPS address change card or phone the office at 715-234-9028. Thank you.