

Life Together

**Bethany Lutheran Church's
e-newsletter
Summer 2021**



**Pastor Paul
Stumme-Diers**

pastorpaul@bethanyofbainbridge.org
Office: 206-842-4241

Who we are

Bethany is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and is Reconciling in Christ, open and affirming.



Where to find us

We are at 7968 Finch Road NE, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.

Online worship

8:30 and 11 a.m. every Sunday at bethanyofbainbridge.org

In Person Worship

10 a.m. every Sunday on the Bethany lawn.

Website

bethanyofbainbridge.org

PASTOR'S ADDRESS

Joyful Vigilance

By Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers



Dear Bethanians,

I invite you into joyful vigilance this summer. I would characterize this as a posture of embracing the gift of joy, while being mindful/watchful/respectful/loving toward our neighbors.

This occurred to me as we were, with great joy and love, caring for our new grandson, Fritz. The joy was absolutely bursting from us, as we gazed for hours upon his sweet countenance. As he slept in his "magic pillow," as he enjoyed the coolness of his changing table, as he sat in his car seat going on an adventure, he held our attention at every moment.

When I held him, I felt myself wrapping my hands around him, making sure he was secure. In the first days, my vigilance, my determination to hold on, probably conveyed to him a certain nervousness on my part. Over time I felt able to relax a bit more and to hold him firmly, yet gently, giving him room to move and stretch and to express his newfound (2 months now) freedom.

Oh, yes, one of many such baby parables to be shared by this pastor, but this applies as well to other dimensions of our life together. Joyful vigilance is that which we exercise in these days when it seems we are moving out of Covid restrictions, and yet...concerns remain for those, especially under 12, who are unvaccinated; when variants, like the Delta variant, are to be considered; and when there are those who remain vulnerable because of their conditions. This is a time to whoop with all out joy! It is also a time to be vigilant in our love for our neighbor.

(Continues next page)

Council leaders



Doug Love,
president,
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Vicki Browning,
vice president,
vickibrowning@
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Jenny Harris,
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dgh4653@msn.com



Jim Rohrscheib,
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Joyful Vigilance: *Continued*

Next week I will be visiting our new baby great-nephew, who spent some time in NICU. Guidelines are unclear as to what is required as precaution, but Laurie and I are being Covid tested (me for the first time) in advance of that meet-up because I want to be loving and respectful to the parents and baby.

When I joyfully enter stores, even though I am vaccinated I generally continue to wear a mask, doing so out of a sense of respect for the workers who are required to be in contact with so many people. Although I dislike wearing masks, I tap into my reserve of joy, so that my vigilance may be that of love and respect.

“Joyful vigilance” was at play during the “heat dome” days (and nights) we experienced. I was filled with joy at having a cool building in which to work and hang out. In addition, our love of neighbor and its accompanying vigilance invited us to open the Bethany building as a cooling center, which evolved because of the need into an overnight cooling center for the half-dozen people who needed it. From that came fun friendships (people exchanging contact info) and joyous storytelling. We had a guest who grew up spending summers in a lighthouse on Cape Cod!

And joyful vigilance will be our approach to our worship services this summer. We will gather, in person, doing so with great joy, but also striving to be respectful of one another, loving toward our neighbor, as we do so. Nothing will diminish that joy that is ours in Christ, and in our vigilance that joy may well deepen.

Pastor Paul



WORSHIP AT BETHANY

Summer Inside and Outside

Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers

I have been told that summer on Bainbridge Island begins on July 4th. And while summer made an early entrance this year, we began our summer worship schedule the July 4th weekend. We are moving our in-person worship service out of the parking lot (unless we have an unseasonal rain/snow shower) and into the patio area between the church and education building. There we will enjoy an outdoor experience with the benefit of shade; we have half a dozen or so parking spots if any prefer to remain in their cars, listening to the FM transmitter.

In July and August for the **10am Sunday morning worship**, you are invited to bring a folding chair, or use one of the church's plastic chairs, which will be on location. Those who would like to sit on the lawn may do so, in an area that is just behind the worship leadership, on the hill above the playground. (Children are very welcome to play in the playground during the worship if that is OK with their parents)

Periodically in July and August, Bethany will hold a **5:00pm Saturday evening worship** service indoors for those who are vaccinated. The singing will be limited, but we will share in prayer, in the Word, and in Holy Communion, in a worship liturgy that is similar to that of Sunday morning. The next Saturday evening worship will be on July 17th at 5pm.

Coffee Hour after the 10am Sunday morning worship also makes a return this summer. Bethany will provide the coffee, juice and lemonade as well as disposable cups and napkins. Volunteer hosts will provide light snacks, set up and clean up. There will be a sign-up sheet to host on the coffee hour table Sunday mornings, or sign up by calling Debbie in the church office.



BETHANY TRANSITIONS

Baptisms: Calvin Amos Kelly on March 14; Asher Harrison Paige on May 29

Deaths: Carol Johnson on June 6

There will be a memorial service to celebrate the life of Jeff Sievertson's father, Albert on Saturday, July 17 at 1pm in the Sanctuary.

BETHANY NEWS

Responding to the Heat Wave

Debbie Rimkus

The Seattle area experienced record heat last month and Bethany responded. At the Sunday morning drive-in worship service, Pastor Paul announced that the air conditioning was on in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, and that they would stay open throughout the day for those who needed a place to cool off. An email went out to the Bethany community and the availability of Bethany as a cooling center was extended to the Bainbridge community through social media. On a record shattering Monday, it was clear that a place to cool down was still needed. Working with Island Volunteer Caregivers and Bainbridge Prepares, Bethany became an overnight cooling center, providing an essential service to several people who were experiencing home temperatures in the 90s. Pastor Paul was grateful that Bethany could provide this service, and touched by the note of gratitude he found the next morning.

I really hate to
leave the loving
warmth of these
quilts - But felt
I should get back
to my apartment.
It was a good
rest -

o I am so
grateful - thank
also to whoever
provided the
cot - it made
a comfortable
night.

this has been
such a great
kindness -
love to all
Mary

Sign Up For Altar Flowers

Gail Christensen

Ready to sign up to provide altar flowers, but wondering how best to do this? Now that we are able to enter the church, you may find the altar flower chart on the bulletin board by the kitchen. If there is a special occasion or person you would like to honor, please sign up. There are plenty of spaces available.

Select either **A** — you provide the flowers or **B** — the altar flower coordinator provides the arrangement and you provide a check [envelops are by the sign-up sheet].

The Blue Flash

Dave Christensen

A gigantic thank you to the Bethany community for their prayers, phone calls, flowers, and cards. It was great to open the 'get well' cards when Gail brought them to the hospital. I appreciate your caring words and drawings.

Now about the 'blue flash' which is the walker that someone was kind enough to donate to Bethany Lutheran. When I went out for my walks [required exercise from PT], my daughter said I was going so fast with the blue walker that we should name it 'the blue flash'. So we did!



Thank you, Dave Christensen

Join the Altar Guild

Gail Christensen

What is Altar Guild? We are people who set up communion and cleanup after; do seasonal decorating, and other requests made by the pastor. We meet about 4 or 5 times per year on the 1st Wednesday of the month at noon with sack lunch. Would you be interested in helping with these tasks or would like more information, please contact:

Barbara Swartling swarts4@aol.com

Carol Fenner rcfenner@gmail.com

Gail Christensen gec40mn@hotmail.com



A Bethany Reflection

By Helen Stoll

Greetings Bethanians and all those who care for this community. My name is Helen Stoll and I am a member of the Bethany Bible Study group that meets on the second Monday of each month. This year members have committed to write a monthly note of appreciation for the Bethany community. Where to begin?

My husband and I have been a part of the Bethany community since the 'early aughts' (2000s) when we moved from Shoreline, north of Seattle, to Kingston, north of Bainbridge. We both recognized immediately that Bethany is a joyful gathering of people, a deep sense of love – happy to be together – uplifting and accompanying one another with prayer and presence. This is a community that is rich in blessings, talent and treasure, and generous in stewardship of those blessings within Bethany, in local communities and around the nation and globe. Worship in word, sacraments, and music are central to Bethany's identity which quickly drew me in.

I grew up in a small Lutheran post WWII mission congregation on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. I can still remember as a young child how happy all the parents were to be together, worshiping, singing, 'pot-lucking' – lots of jello and tuna casseroles. In my adulthood I understood that these were young people whose first *decade* of adult life had been suspended by an all-consuming war. They were thankful to be able to return to their families and communities and begin their own families.

With the exception of those (sadly typically Lutheran) early adult, 'independent' years, I have been blessed to be part of praying and accompanying congregations with all of their faithfulness and challenges. Through all the joys and vagaries of life growing up, raising our own two sons, and loving our growing family, the prayerfully faithful community has been essential.

My vivacious Mother was stricken with Lupus at 29 years old. Being steeped in her own Lutheran childhood she knew how to both receive and give back in Christian community while our family was lovingly supported through the years, an experience that is deep in my bones. I am fortunate to keep in touch with 'the girls' with whom I was confirmed. Oh, the stories, laughter, and tears we share!

Evan and I still meet monthly, since 1980, with our Marriage Encounter Circle, all members of our previous church in Shoreline. As you can imagine having raised children, completed careers, and enjoying retirement, some members have now joined that great cloud of witnesses of which the writer of the letter to the Hebrews speaks. We give thanks for and rejoice in the hope of the resurrection as we remember them, and encourage one another... Lots of laughter, prayers, and some tears.

I remember clearly on the first morning worshipping in Bethany's sanctuary being drawn to the beautiful wooden cross and to the clear windows behind it. Comforting and open to the wider world, all part of our lives as God's people. Through those windows I can trace the seasons of both the church year and of creation – while listening carefully to the sermon, of course...

Over nearly a year now, as our lives and life together have been up-ended, many of us have been worshipping in the parking lot among the trees both deciduous and evergreen. As I sit in the car, I have come to regard the line of the tips of the evergreen trees across the western horizon as a comforting 'window' also. No matter the challenges that have come my way, we still gather to worship.

Somehow I did not anticipate the glory of the blossoming ornamental fruit trees until they burst upon us! A gracious surprise. As I "feasted my eyes" on their color, I realized their advanced age and remembered

those like Sid Malbon who, more than a half a century ago, planned and planted the landscape surrounding us. They too are part of that 'great cloud of witnesses' that accompany us. I am comforted by that continuity and by the variety in ages and backgrounds of all who continue to gather virtually and in our cars.

And I am thankful to God for God's church in all its forms, most especially this faithful community who makes music like angels, feasts together at the Lord's table – i.e. currently our vehicle dashboards and kitchen tables – and, once again will slurp coffee (and tea) and accompany one another in each other's *real* presence. Until then and beyond, we remain God's faithful people in God's church and in the world. Hallelujah!

Sanctuary Roof Update

Steve Christensen

Since condensation in the ceiling of the Sanctuary was identified as a serious problem in early 2020, Bethany Lutheran contracted with a consulting firm to evaluate the issue. Their investigation confirmed the problem and cause. Based on that investigation a solution was identified by the Bethany Roof Committee. The solution to the problem will require replacement of the ceiling and roof insulation. We are working to create a Master Plan to identify work elements that could address possible related opportunities in the Sanctuary. Work is underway to clarify the scope of work and estimated costs of a project that will be presented to the Bethany Church Council for acceptance and presentation to the Congregation for approval and funding.

Back to School Supplies for Lutheran World Relief

Alice McCain

The school year may have just ended, but the Back-to-School supplies sales will begin before we know it! School supplies are especially needed this fall in countries hard hit by Covid-19. Several Bethany members are busy making Lutheran World Relief book bags so we can send filled bags to school children around the world. We will fill and ship the book bags in early October, when we also send our quilts and baby kits.



Here is where you can help: Scan store sales ads for the supplies listed below. Bring purchased school supplies to Bethany and place them in the labelled box in the Narthex. Office Depot/Office Max, Staples, Target, WalMart and Fred Meyer often have summer sales on a good selection of school supplies. Last year, Bethany shipped 57 school kits along with Lutheran World Relief quilts and baby kits. With donations of kits and supplies from many Bethanians, who knows how many school kits we might send this year!

Supplies: 70-sheet spiral notebooks (wide- or college-ruled), 30-centimeter or inches/centimeter rulers; pencil sharpeners; blunt/safety scissors; unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers; black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink); boxes of 16 or 24 crayons; 2 and ½ inch erasers

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Bethany Preschool finishes a successful year

Katie Drov Dahl, Preschool Director, preschool@bethanyofbainbridge.org

The Preschool wrapped up a full year at the end of May! We finished out the year holding an online class, two outdoor playgroups, and an in-person class. In all, we were able to serve twenty-one families.

While the year presented many challenges, we are thankful we were able to serve our preschool families and meet their needs. There were many blessings this year, including finding joy in more time outside which led to more play and discoveries in nature.

We are looking forward to fully opening in the fall and to having our students and their families return ready to learn and play!



BETHANY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

BI/NK CROP Walk

By Chris Christensen

The BI/NK CROP Hunger Team needs new members. We are down to three team members, two of whom plan extensive traveling this September and next year. We are at the point where this year's CROP Hunger Walk may be our last if we don't get new team members. If you or anyone you know would be interested in serving on the Team, please contact Dave Beemer or Chris Christensen (contact info below).



The BI/NK CROP Hunger Walk is one of the strongest and longest-running CROP Walks in the nation. Each year, we rank among the top walks in the nation for funds raised – thanks to the amazing support of our faithful recruiters, our local faith communities, and our anonymous matching donor. We've walked for 25 years and raised nearly \$1 million toward hunger relief, with 20% going to Helpline House and 5% going to NK Fishline Food Bank.

While rain, wind and even pandemics have never stopped the local event (although we went "virtual" in 2020!), there is a serious possibility that our dwindling volunteer team may be forced to announce that 2021 will be the final chapter in this great happening. As creative and innovative as our small team has become in these trying times, we can't see a way to continue if we don't pick up some new (young?) bodies to help with the event.

Our hope is to have a couple of fresh faces on the team this summer so they can join the 2021 effort and get their feet wet - figuratively. We are hoping for a dry walk in September! With four or five folks on the CROP team, the event flows quite smoothly with just enough sporadic organization to keep Church World Service amazed at our efforts and always using us as an example for the rest of the country.

For more information on what is involved, or to join the team contact: Dave Beemer, d_beem@comcast.net, 206.715.3901 or Chris Christensen, cschristensen@msn.com, 206.842.5830



THE GREATER CHURCH

Report of the 2021 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly

David and Barbara Swartling

The 2021 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly, held on Saturday, May 15, was memorable for many reasons. Since last year's Assembly was cancelled, this was the first Assembly for Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee, and the first to be held electronically in our synod. With 332 voting members participating – including Pastor Paul, Linnea Chu, Peter Miles, and David and Barbara Swartling from Bethany – it might have been labeled an “AZoombly”.



Despite logistical challenges, the key ingredients of a Synod Assembly, including worship, adoption of constitutional and bylaw amendments, reports of elections, and approval of a budget went smoothly. In addition, the recognition of milestone anniversaries of rostered ministers was particularly moving as were reports on new ministries in the Synod. Indeed, Bishop Bryan Wee highlighted five focus areas for Synod ministry since her election: faithful innovation; youth and young adults; leadership; connection and racial justice. Under these mantras, a number of new and innovative ministries have begun, including Living Stones prison ministry, the Stilly Valley Dinner Church, and Growing Young, an emerging strategy to attract youth and young adults! There is also LIVE (Living into Vocational Engagement), which can best be appreciated by viewing the video on the Synod Website: www.lutheransnw.org.

The representative of the ELCA churchwide organization was Rev. Christopher Otten, ELCA Director of Federal Chaplaincies. A former Lt. Colonel in the Air Force, he served 21 years as a chaplain, most recently in Afghanistan. Interestingly, Rev. Otten described serving as an ELCA Chaplain to having o(-) blood, because our Lutheran theology enables them to provide support and counsel to people of all faiths, just as someone with o(-) blood is a universal donor.

Bishop Bryan Wee also shared that the Synod distributed \$117,000 in Covid Relief funds to congregations and other recipients, and that mission support from the synod's congregations was close to the budgeted amount despite the pandemic. As the Assembly drew to a close, we learned that Bethany was one of the recipients of a Grace Grant; it was awarded \$20,000 in seed funds for our affordable housing vision!

Even electronically, participating in the Synod Assembly reminded us that we are interdependent partners in the ministry of the ELCA!



July

Mitchell Milander	7/2	Vicki Browning	7/12	Doug Dudgeon	7/22
Martin Carlsen	7/3	Mary Toepel Coar	7/13	Howard Howlett	7/25
Barbara Michael	7/3	Patricia Ellerby	7/15	Wade Watson	7/26
Tom Croker	7/4	Lloyd Pritchett	7/17	Tia Stauffer	7/27
Harrison Howlett	7/6	Linda Sommerseth	7/18	Maimu Truitt	7/30
Elsie Love	7/10	Samuel Drov Dahl	7/22	Angelina Fenner	7/31

August

Jacob Bang-Knudsen	8/2	Vince Mattson	8/7	Stephen Deines	8/17
Joe Sommerseth	8/3	Bruce Anderson	8/8	Callie Johnson	8/19
Ruth Bartunek	8/5	Vickie Bech	8/8	Shari Houser	8/22
Ruth Miles	8/5	Melanie Olson	8/9	Bob Jakubik	8/23
Benay Nordby	8/5	Paul Robbins	8/10	Grace Miles	8/30
Burton Shields	8/5	Paul Stumme-Diers	8/13	Gladys Schulz	8/30
Sona Pritchett	8/6	Whitney Lane	8/13	Colleen Chupik	8/31
Scott Ellerby	8/7	Steve Christensen	8/15	Georgia Figgins	8/31

July

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	28	29 ✦ Quilters	30	1	2	3 ✦ 5pm Indoor Worship
4 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	5	6 ✦ Rachel Circle Bible Study ✦ Quilters	7	8	9	10
11 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	12	13 ✦ Council Zoom meeting ✦ Quilters	14	15	16	17 ✦ 5pm Indoor Worship ✦ 1pm Albert Sievertson Memorial Service
18 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	19	20 ✦ Quilters	21	22	23	24
25 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	26	27 ✦ Quilters	28	29	30	31

August

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	2	3 ✦ Rachel Circle Bible Study ✦ Quilters	4	5	6	7
8 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	9	10 ✦ Council Zoom meeting ✦ Quilters	11	12	13	14
15 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	16	17 ✦ Quilters	18	19	20	21
22 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	23	24 ✦ Quilters	25	26	27	28
29 ✦ 10:00am Outside worship ✦ 8:30am Sunday online worship ✦ 11:00am Sunday online worship	30	31 ✦ Quilters	1	2	3	4