

Life Together

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



**Pastor Paul
Stumme-Diers**

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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.

Sunday Worship

10 a.m followed by coffee
fellowship

Saturday Worship

5 p.m. followed by wine
and cheese fellowship.

Website

bethanyofbainbridge.org

PASTOR'S ADDRESS

"For all that has been: Thanks!

For all that will be: Yes!

—Dag Hammarskjöld

For All That Has Been, Thanks...

By Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers



Dear Bethanians,

The past 18 months have given us ample time and opportunity to reflect on our life together as the Bethany community, on the impact of a global pandemic and our response to it, and how we "live and move and have our being" in these times. There will be more such opportunities for reflection in the future, but I thought now, as we are planning to return to indoor worship the first weekend in October 2021, we might reflect, with gratitude, and with a measure of loss, on what has been.

I feel as though we have been living in two-month intervals for the past year and a half, planning out into the future, but every two months or so needing a recalibration of those plans. At the beginning of Lent 2020, it was unimaginable that we wouldn't be worshiping in the Bethany sanctuary for Easter. As we had parking lot worship that spring, it evolved from pick-up trucks and a canopy, to an Allen Lang-built stage, then with the FM transmitter add-on, and most recently to worship in the patio area between the buildings. The genius and fortitude of Jeff Jensen made it all happen.

Donovan Johnson's funeral was held on the lawn west of the church, and then a year later Carol Johnson's funeral was held outdoors in the patio area. The wedding of Emily Cauter and Vaughn Rohrdanz in August 2020 became nuptials in August 2021. Dick Coar and Mary Toepel were married in the bed of a pick-up truck, with a rainbow arching over them.

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Council leaders



Doug Love,
president,
doug.love@
klgates.com



Vicki Browning,
vice president,
vickibrowning@
comcast.net



Jennie Harris,
secretary,
dgh4653@msn.com



Jim Rohrscheib,
treasurer,
jrohrscheib@
juno.com

For All That Has Been, Thanks...: Continued

Some other highlights:

- + Using the BI Parks and Rec Stage for Festival worship services, during Holy Week and for Christmas. Then using it again for a music festival, for High School Baccalaureate, IVC recognition event, NKHS high School choir concert.
- + The canopy put in place in our patio area, to protect worshipers and preschoolers from the elements. Thank you, Jeff Jensen.
- + ZOOM Choir and Council meetings.
- + "Quilt Sunday" with quilts in attendance in our sanctuary, and the blessing outside.
- + Rachel Circle Bible Study outdoors on the patio.
- + Online worship in collaboration with Poulsbo First Lutheran Church.
- + Online Children's messages.
- + A CROP Walk to Helpline House, laden with canned goods.
- + Pastor Paul's CROP Walk and "Holy Week Walk" from Fishline (Poulsbo) to Helpline House (BI), looking for signs of suffering and hope.
- + "Window" visits with Bethany members in care facilities.
- + The generosity of Bethany members in sustaining the ministry of our congregation here and through continued strong outreach.
- + The spirit of the Bethany community, that of understanding, encouragement, creativity, with our center on Christ.

There are so many other ways that we can name together, reflecting on the past year. I invite you to compile your own list, recognizing the presence of God through the struggles and in the small victories.

And we look ahead, to all the things God has in store for us in the months and years ahead...and we say, "Yes".

Pastor Paul

FROM THE COUNCIL

Doug Love, Council President

Financial Status

We are over two-thirds of the way through the calendar year, and the Church's day-to-day finances are in good shape. Through the end of August, we have received contributions and revenue totaling \$283,267, which is \$15,174 ahead of budget. We have spent \$255,049, which is \$23,978 less than budgeted. Thus through the end of August, our net cash has increased \$28,218. A big thank you to everyone who has been regularly giving, and to those who have made extra or special gifts.

Sanctuary Repair and Refresh

As previously discussed, the Council is working on plans to redesign the Sanctuary ceiling to address condensation issues that arose a few years ago when the Sanctuary was reroofed. The Council believes this is also a good time to update the lighting and carpeting in the Sanctuary and repaint the walls. We are hoping to avoid increasing the Church's mortgage by financing this project through a combination of existing capital funds and a special fundraising effort to commence later this fall. Stay tuned.

Disaster Assistance Hub

During the heat wave this past summer, the Church opened its doors to members of the community who needed relief from the heat. Some came for a few hours, others stayed overnight. The service we provided was necessary and appreciated by both the City of Bainbridge Island and the individuals who used our facilities. As a way to offer similar services in the future, the Church and the City of Bainbridge Island have agreed that the Church will be one of several disaster assistance hubs on Bainbridge Island. In the event of a disaster such as an extreme weather event or earthquake, the Church's facilities would be offered to trained personnel from the community to offer assistance to those adversely affected by the event. All personnel and supplies would be provided by outside resources.

BETHANY NEWS

Bethany's LWR Book Bag Project Has Grown!

In 2019 several members of Bethany Rachel Circle began making Lutheran World Relief (LWR) book bags for children in need. Many Bethany members happily answered the call and donated school supplies to fill the bags. In our first year we were delighted to make and fill 57 bags for children around the world. We skipped 2020 (Covid-19). In 2021 we are even happier to report that 80 school bags are made and filled, soon ready to be shipped off for the November LWR Ingathering in Seattle.

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Rachel Circle's quilting supplies provide sturdy fabric for the bags. Four women, *Selina Johnson, Barbara Michael, Gladys Schultz* and *Alice McCain* have sewn the bags at home with their own sewing skills, labor and thread. Completing the bags by attaching shoulder straps and filling them with donated supplies has turned into a fun, friendship-building activity for several additional volunteers. Check out the recent photo of volunteers attaching and tying cord straps to the book bags.



This is truly “God’s work, our hands.” Our thanks go out to all who make this project a success. And the children thank you, too!



Affordable Housing Update

David Swartling, Affordable Housing Task Force Chair

In several unexpected ways, Bethany’s vision for affordable housing has re-surfaced recently! By way of background, more than a year ago, the Affordable Housing Task Force, in collaboration with architect and consultant Jonathan Davis, advised staff at the City of Bainbridge Island that a new state statute (RCW 35.63.280) mandates an *increased* density bonus for religious organizations developing affordable housing. Initial efforts to advocate for such a density bonus were dampened as a result of the Covid pandemic, but in late spring this year – at the suggestion of a City Council member -- a specific request was submitted to grant such a density bonus to Bethany. After a number of informal conversations, the City Council has now placed Bethany’s request on its meeting agenda on October 26! Stay tuned for more information about this development!

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While Bethany's request for a density bonus has been pending, another significant event has emerged. As a result of federal legislation in response to Covid, ARPA funds in the amount of more than \$7 million have been made available to Bainbridge Island. Housing Resources Bainbridge (HRB) immediately responded to the City's request for input and publicly advocated to expend more than half of these funds for affordable housing projects. A number of Bethany members also have followed the example of HRB and sent letters to COBI advocating for affordable housing and pointing out that our congregation has a potential project that could be assisted in moving forward with some of the ARPA funds. The City Council initially addressed how to allocate the ARPA funds at its meeting on September 28. In that meeting the Council specifically authorized expending \$2 million of the ARPA funds on HRB's Madison Avenue affordable housing project, and also allocated an additional \$1.75 million for affordable housing projects to be determined in the future. Hopefully, Bethany can be the recipient of some of these funds for its affordable housing vision on the South 40!

Taken together, these discussions at COBI provide encouragement to Bethany's affordable housing vision, and perhaps they signal that the lengthy pause due to Covid may be coming to an end. Given the skyrocketing real estate prices on Bainbridge Island new opportunities for affordable housing represent an encouraging development! Stay tuned for more information about these discussions and keep those experiencing housing insecurity in your thoughts and prayers!

Giving Thanks for Special Volunteers

All churches recognize how essential volunteers are. And Bethany is no exception. This month we would like to highlight two special volunteers that have blessed the Bethany community with their time and talent.



Stan Wiegman is a relatively new volunteer who has made a huge impact already. Stan approached Bethany member Jennie Harris asking if the church could use a regular handyman volunteer. Pastor Paul and Debbie in the office could immediately think of several projects! From sticky drawers in the kitchen, to changing lightbulbs, to washing windows and many things in between, Stan has come once a week to tackle those tasks that keep the building running smoothly. His latest project has

been to rebuild the broken foot bridge on the south end of the property. We are grateful for his wide range of handyman skills and especially his generous spirit.

Jeff Jensen, a long-time member of Bethany, was quick to say yes when Pastor Paul came to him with an idea to expand the covered area of the patio with water resistant canvas sails. After giving it some thought, Jeff purchased the extra supplies needed and constructed a terrific support system for the sails. The Bethany Preschool will be using the space to play and safely eat snacks and lunch outside this year. And we were able to continue with our outside worship until the end of September knowing we would stay dry thanks to Jeff. Please express your thanks to Jeff for his ingenuity and can-do spirit.



Worship Assistants

As we make our way back to inside worship on both Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, worship assistants are also back. Debbie in the office will be handling the scheduling and reaching out to those of you who signed up through the time and talent survey to greet, usher, read and host the hospitality hour. New worship assistants are also welcome. Contact Debbie by calling the office or emailing her at info@bethanyofbainbridge.org to get started. Have a particular Saturday or Sunday that you would like to volunteer for? Let Debbie know or see the bulletin board for sign up sheets.

Bible Study Groups

Bible Study groups are in full swing this fall. The Rachel Bible Study Group will meet with Pastor Paul in the Fellowship Hall the first Tuesday each month at 10am. The Bible study session will be followed with quilting. The Men's Bible Study Group will meet with Pastor Paul in the Fellowship Hall on the second and fourth Tuesdays each month at 8am. The Women's Bible Study group will meet on the second Monday each month. Meetings will either be in a group member's home or via Zoom. For more information on the Women's Bible Study Group contact Pastor Sonja Selboe at 360-979-7985 (Cell) or 360-297-1779 (Home).

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children's Sundays



With our return to the sanctuary this fall, Bethany welcomes children in worship. Whenever children are present at either the Saturday evening or Sunday morning worship, Pastor Paul will have a special children's message. Additionally, plan now for the second Sunday of the month to have a focus on children and families during worship. Does your child play an instrument? Would they enjoy an opportunity to pass out bulletins or be a reader? Let Pastor Paul or Debbie know so we can include them through special music or assisting with worship.

The Second Sunday worship services will be followed by a hike with Pastor Paul. Our October 10th hike will be to Helpline House with a "noisy offering". We will have a collection during worship that morning to benefit the ELCA Hunger Appeal. Come with noisy pockets - quarters, dimes, nickels, pennies. Change is good! Don't have a lot of change in your pocket? Donations of non-perishables are also welcome. All are invited to take part in the "noisy offering" and hike.



We also be recording new messages each week from Pastor Paul just for kids and posting them on the website. Watch for them every Thursday afternoon.

Confirmation Class

The 2021-22 Confirmation Class convened for it's first class, seated outside of Woodward Middle School during early release on Monday. It felt so good to be back together, discussing what it means to affirm our baptism (the rite of Confirmation). The teacher always learns much in such sessions, and this week Pastor Paul heard variations on the Ten Commandments he had never imagined!

Bethany Lutheran Preschool is off to a wonderful start!

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

We are thrilled to welcome a new staff member, Missy Rehder, as our Assistant Teacher in both our Bumble Bee and Firefly classes. Missy is a mother to three girls who all attended Bethany, and we are so happy to have her here.



Our preschool is currently serving twenty-four families between our three classes, and it has been so joyful to have our doors open again and get to see so many children playing, learning, and growing. We have had to make quite a few adjustments by adopting a number of COVID protocols, one of which is increased time outdoors. We have loved getting to create

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new learning spaces outdoors as well as using more of our beautiful church campus. Just last week, our Bumble Bees (our youngest class) made fizzy mudpies out in the orchard.

As we transition into the fall and the beginning of the holiday season, we are looking forward to some of our annual preschool traditions like our Halloween parade, our Helpline Food Drive, and our Thanksgiving Feast.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers as we serve our Island families!



BETHANY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

BI/NK CROP Walk

After having to go virtual in 2020, an in-person BI/NK CROP walk was back this year. The BI/NK CROP Hunger Walk has been 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. And this year a very generous anonymous donor will be matching the donations two to one. Bethany youth helped set up the course and a stalwart contingent braved the rainy afternoon to demonstrate our commitment to this important effort. See the photo of our terrific set up crew on the next page.



Supporting Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Lutheran Communities Services Northwest (LCSNW) is all about “making our world a safer, healthier and more hopeful place to live”. They provide behavior and health services, child welfare programs, aging and independent living support, and refugee and immigration services. When the recent crisis in Afghanistan happened, Lutheran Community Services Northwest was quick to set up systems to extend a welcoming hand to refugees who would arrive in the Pacific Northwest area. And Bethany was quick to respond with bathroom and cleaning kits. A huge thank you to all who contributed supplies and especially to the volunteers who organized the supplies into kits for delivery to LCSNW. If you would like to make a donation in support of the Afghan resettlement efforts or to volunteer to help, visit their website at <https://lcsnw.org/>.



THE GREATER CHURCH



From the Bishop

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

At first glance, it does not seem as though Teresa of Avila, noted Spanish Roman Catholic saint from the sixteenth century, would have much to say about today's world. You see, she is well known for her mysticism, her ecstatic prayers, several quotes that she might or might not have said, and her reforms in the church. All of these things are interesting – but what do they have to do with the 21st century and what is happening in the world today? In the last few days, though, I have been thinking about what she writes at the beginning of her work, *The Interior Castle*.

At the beginning of this book Teresa admits that she is tired. On the first page she writes, "I'm writing this book under obedience and I'm already finding it hard. God hasn't given me any desire for this work, and my head is so full of noise I can barely compose a letter about the most ordinary business, much less a book about prayer."

I am so thankful for Teresa stating it bluntly. Teresa is unsure if she'll succeed, she is not sure she has it in her to do what she is being asked to do, she is nervous and distracted. In other words, St. Teresa sounds a lot like all of us – especially when we are being asked to do something that is different or hard or difficult.

Truthfully, it can be daunting as we continue to navigate this pandemic, as we continue to navigate the changes of the world and the changing church, as we strive to live into what God is calling us to do. It is difficult, as Teresa fully expresses, to push past our fear or our unease or our malaise to do what God is calling us to do. It is pretty impossible to do a new thing without God's help and guidance.

And so, as I reflect on Teresa's difficulties, our difficulties, I am also drawn to scripture – specifically Isaiah 43. In the first part of Isaiah 43 we read:

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

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The prophet writes that God created us, God formed us. We have no need for fear because God knows each of our names. God calls each of us. We are God's. No matter the circumstance, no matter the trial, no matter the fire. This is what Teresa understood and it is what we cling to when we struggle and when we wonder if we can go on. I invite you to hold Isaiah 43:1-3 closely as we hear these words from Isaiah 43:18-19.

Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.

As we hold close the promise that God creates us, forms us, names us, calls us, and holds us, only then can we hear the promise in these words that a new thing, a new day is coming. That God will make a way. May we hold close the words of St. Teresa and the prophet Isaiah. May you feel God's love surrounding you when all seems overwhelming. And may you rise in the strength of the Lord knowing that God's love surrounds you and fills you – and a way is being made as we all go forward together in Christ.

+Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee
bishop@lutheransnw.org

(Birthdays and calendar on next page.)



October

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| Mattea Drov Dahl | 10/1 | Mary Harader | 10/15 | Cynthia Heine | 10/18 |
| Sylvia Cauter | 10/2 | Jessica Wilson | 10/15 | Drew Hansen | 10/22 |
| Marianne Milander | 10/6 | Casey Shields | 10/16 | Anne Lindquist | 10/23 |
| Alice McCain | 10/8 | Carlton Anderson | 10/17 | Joe Michael | 10/27 |
| Chris Christensen | 10/10 | Luanne Croker | 10/17 | Brighton Whittlesey | 10/28 |
| Linda Stenberg | 10/10 | | | Hunter Whittlesey | 10/28 |

The Month Ahead

2021

CALENDAR YEAR

OCTOBER

CALENDAR MONTH

SUNDAY

FIRST DAY OF WEEK

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| 25 <i>Non-Bethany events in italics</i> FH - Fellowship Hall | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 01 12 Noon: Alanon, Sanctuary | 02 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship |
| 03 10:00am: Worship, followed by coffee fellowship | 04 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH | 05 10:00am: Rachel Circle Bible Study followed by Quilters, FH 10:15am: Preschool Chapel Time, Sanctuary | 06 10:20am: Preschool Chapel Time, Sanctuary 7:00pm: Bethany Choir, FH | 07 | 08 12 Noon: Alanon, Sanctuary | 09 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship |
| 10 10:00am: Noisy Offering Sunday - Worship, followed by coffee fellowship and walk to Helpline House | 11 9:30am: Women's Bible Study, via Zoom 2:00pm, Confirmation Class, Woodward 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH | 12 8:00am: Men's Bible Study, FH 10:00am: Quilters, FH 7:00pm: Council Meeting, FH | 13 7:00pm: Bethany Choir, FH | 14 | 15 12 Noon: Alanon, Sanctuary | 16 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship |
| 17 10:00am: Worship, followed by coffee fellowship | 18 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH | 19 10:00am: Quilters, FH 10:15am: Preschool Chapel Time, Sanctuary | 20 10:20am: Preschool Chapel Time, Sanctuary 7:00pm: Bethany Choir, FH | 21 | 22 12 Noon: Alanon, Sanctuary | 23 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship |
| 24 10:00am: Quilt Sunday - Worship, followed by coffee fellowship | 25 2:00pm: Confirmation Class, Woodward 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH | 26 8:00am: Men's Bible Study, FH 10:00am: Quilters, FH | 27 10:45: Preschool Halloween Party, FH 7:00pm: Bethany Choir, FH | 28 11:00am: Preschool Halloween Party, FH | 29 11:00am: Preschool Halloween Party, FH 12 Noon: Alanon, Sanctuary | 30 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship |
| 31 10:00am, Reformation Sunday - Worship, followed by coffee fellowship | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 |