

Life Together

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



**Pastor Paul
Stumme-Diers**
pastorpaul@bethany
ofbainbridge.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.

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

Letting Your Light Shine

By Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers

Dear Friends in Christ,

*"Let your light so shine before others that they may see your
good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*



Is this a quote from:

- 1.) Matthew 5:16
- 2.) The Service of Holy Baptism
- 3.) Bethany's 2022 Stewardship Theme
- 4.) All of the above

As I am writing this, I am preparing to go into our Preschool Chapel for this morning, where the children will be singing, "This Little Light of Mine." I know they will sing it with gusto, even as they try to get the hand motions right! In the same way, there aren't many hymns/songs that get adults moving their bodies and singing with great enthusiasm like this one! The energy resounds from our childhood memories, from VBS and Bible Camp, perhaps one of the first songs we sang as children in a church choir...it connects us with our past in a fun way.

"This Little Light of Mine" also is an expression of what we strive to be today, casting our light, a light reflective of God's love light. That image can be especially powerful in these fall days, as the light diminishes, as the cooler temperatures creep in, and as social isolation can press in on

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Council leaders



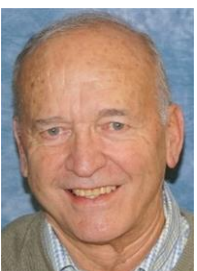
Doug Love,
president,
doug.love@
klgates.com



Vicki Browning,
vice president,
vickibrowning@
comcast.net



Jennie Harris,
secretary,
dgh4653@msn.com



Jim Rohrscheib,
treasurer,
jrohrscheib@
juno.com

Letting Your Light Shine: *Continued*

many. That also is a light we need to “let shine” in the uncertainty of pandemic and socio-political concerns. There is ample need for the light...

...and there is ample light for the need!

At Baptism, we light a candle and say, “Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Baptism is calling us to let our light shine, something we take on as a way of being, as a style of life, sharing warmth and light in the spirit of Christ, the light of the world. It is a light no darkness can overcome.

In the weeks to come, there will be many opportunities to consider the light:

- + All Saints Sunday, November 7th, with the lights of remembrance
- + Advent, with the lights of expectation and preparation
- + Christmas Eve, welcoming the Light of the World with candles and songs of illumination

“Let your light so shine” will also be an opportunity to reflect on our stewardship, as lights reflecting God’s love. Watch your mailboxes for our stewardship materials, more ways of singing out, “This Little Light of Mine.”

Shine On,

Pastor Paul



FROM THE COUNCIL

2021 Giving Statements

Third quarter giving statements were mailed in mid-October. Please take a look at your statement to ensure its accuracy ahead of year-end. If you did not receive your statement, or need a second copy, contact Debbie in the office. Please note: any year-end donations that you want to count towards your 2021 tax return must be received in the office by December 30th so that it can be deposited on December 31st. Donations received after December 30th will appear on the first quarter 2022 giving statement.

2022 Stewardship Campaign

With 2021 drawing to a close, it's time for the 2022 stewardship campaign. Watch your mail for stewardship materials including a pledge card and a Time-and-Talent survey. Making a pledge to give in 2022 helps the Church Council formulate a budget that will sustain our existing programs and benevolences. Please also complete and return the Time-and-Talent survey. This is your opportunity to let us know what you would like to see in the way of programming for 2022 and how you would like to help the Bethany community as a volunteer.

WORSHIP AT BETHANY

Thanksgiving Eve Service

While the Interfaith Council is not planning a Thanksgiving service this year, Bethany will be offering a one at 7pm on Wednesday, November 24th. This beautiful service with a special litany of Thanksgiving will be especially meaningful as we express gratitude for the progress we have made in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. All are welcome.



BETHANY NEWS

Quilt and Kits Sunday

Beautiful quilts, baby kits and school supply bags were blessed at worship services on October 23rd and 24th. The Rachel Circle and many other volunteers completed 76 quilts, 53 baby kits and 80 school supply bags. After being blessed, volunteers came together again to gather and box up the quilts and kits for shipment to Lutheran World Relief. The tradition of making quilts for Lutheran World Relief has been a part of Bethany life since the 1980s. At that time, the Rachel Circle was meeting for Bible study once a month, as they do now. One of the ladies had heard about making quilts for LWR and suggested they should stay after Bible study to quilt together. The Rachel Circle did this for a while, but then decided they could get more quilting
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done if they met every other week. It became difficult to remember which week it was, so they began to meet every week. Along the way, baby kits and school supply bags were added to the mix. The quilts, baby kits and school bags help people in need throughout the world through Lutheran World Relief. The quilts have also provided warmth and comfort locally at Martha and Mary, the Compass Center and Holden Village. The Rachel Circle recently received a heartfelt thank you postcard from a Holden Village volunteer:

“October 23, 2021

Dear Friends of Holden Village,

Good golly, Miss Molly! I have been at Holden for two work weeks, volunteering with the housekeeping team to help ready the lodges and chalets for winter (I leave today) and not until now did I see that the lovely quilt that covered and warmed me all these nights was made by you! Thank you for your log cabin piece – it reminds me of one I have at home (Washington DC) made from squares of my grandmother or great grandmother. Your threads, like hers, have not pulled out! Blessed be the tie that binds.

Truly, Christopher Weidner, ELCA Pastor, retired”

This is truly “God’s work, our hands.” Our thanks go out to all who make this project a success.



Update from the Bethany Affordable Housing Task Force

David Swartling

On October 26, the Bainbridge Island City Council considered the request of Bethany's Affordable Housing Task Force, as authorized by the Congregation Council, for an "increased density bonus" for affordable housing under a new Washington state statute passed in 2019. The result was a referral to the Planning Commission to draft an ordinance to address the request, which it will begin to consider in the next few weeks. In the process of debate, the original motion was amended to clarify that the request should be treated as a pilot rather than the creation of a "one-size fits all" ordinance.

In anticipation of the City Council meeting, Bethany's Task Force worked to mobilize support, both among Bethany members and the larger community. Numerous letters were written to the City Council, including support from Phedra Elliott of the Housing Resource Board, and Maria Metzler of Helpline House as well as several pastors. In addition, Pastor Paul, David Swartling, Phedra Elliott, and Jonathan Davis (Island architect and consultant for the Bethany Affordable Housing Task Force) spoke in favor of Bethany's request during the public comment portion of the meeting (which occurred 2-1/2 hours before the matter appeared on the agenda for discussion!). Task Force member Barbara Deines also presented in writing an affirming statement as President of the Helpline House Board of Directors, as well as a personal note as a 35-year BI resident.

While the outcome was both helpful and hopeful, the City Council's discussion was disjointed and somewhat disappointing. As expected, some Council members spoke encouragingly about addressing the affordable housing situation and the authenticity of Bethany's request, but others expressed concern about changing the character of Bainbridge Island and pointed out that Bethany is not located in Winslow where increased density is supposed to occur. Unfortunately, some questions and comments raised issues that do not exist because they are clearly addressed by the statute, which some on the Council apparently had not read. (You can read about the City Council's consideration of Bethany's request on the front page of the October 29 *Bainbridge Review!*)

Bethany's Affordable Housing Task Force met again on Monday, November 1 to recap the City Council's meeting and to strategize regarding next steps. Stay tuned for more information about plans to present Bethany's position, including arguments in support of the request and the critical need for affordable housing in our community. As Pastor Paul profoundly pointed out, Bethany's request reflects both a call to serve our neighbors and a step toward building a more healthy and diverse community!

Thanks to all who communicated with the City Council, supporting the request for a density bonus and advocating for action to address the increasingly acute need for affordable housing! This important work will continue!

Altar Guild is Reorganizing and You are Welcome!

As of November, it will be two full years since Altar Guild has met in person! During the height of the pandemic, while we worshiped outdoors and took care to keep distance from one another to avoid risk of infection, the visible evidence of Altar Guild in setting up Communion, and preparing our worship space for holiday celebrations, was largely on “hold.” But even during that time, Altar Guild continued arrange for altar flowers when requested to do so.



In recent weeks, Bethany has returned to indoor worship – with some changes in place to continue keeping us safe. Altar Guild is also reorganizing to support our worship life in this modified setting. A “re-organizational” meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, November 10, at Noon in the Bethany fellowship hall. As in the past, the meeting will begin with a brown-bag luncheon (with hosted dessert). Pastor Paul frequently joins us for lunch and devotions. As new business, our initial tasks will include a briefing on the new Communion protocol, scheduling members to prepare the table for Communion each week (and clean up afterwards), and planning for decoration of the sanctuary for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas.

New members of Altar Guild are always welcome! As it's become safer to meet indoors, we invite you to come - to form new friendships and rekindle the fellowship that comes with sharing a meal and planning for the work we do together. Masking protocols will be followed! Altar Guild generally meets six times a year for lunch and planning, on the first Wednesday of the months in which meetings are held. In December, this meeting will include a cookie exchange and preparation of cookie plates to be delivered by carolers to shut-in Bethanians.

To new as well as returning Altar Guild members: Please join us on November 10! To assist in planning, please RSVP to Gail Christensen (gec40mn@hotmail.com or 206.842.5469). We look forward to seeing you soon.

Caring Hearts

The Caring Hearts Team will be reconvening in person on Thursday, November 18th at 10am, after a hiatus during the pandemic. This particular ministry has taken a different shape during the pandemic, even as the needs continue to be there for connection and care to be shown to the more vulnerable of our parishioners. The team believes this is a good time to ease back into more broad congregational involvement. In the past the areas of "care" included transportation, home communion, one-to-one companions, cards and notes, etc. The team will be assessing the vision of this ministry and how to meet needs, recognizing the residual restrictions we may be feeling concerning Covid. Newcomers to the team are welcome!

Looking Ahead to Advent

The cool rain of November is here which means the season of Advent is around the corner. Bethany will once again celebrate the beginning of Advent by making Advent logs. Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 28th, the first Sunday of Advent, and plan to stay after worship for a time of coffee fellowship, treats and Advent log making. If you would like to help organize the event contact Debbie Rimkus at info@bethanyofbainbridge.org or Kathy Dudgeon at 1sillymama@gmail.com.



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Programming for Children and Families

The pandemic has made programming for children and families especially difficult. Out of an abundance of caution and a deep sense of care for our youngest Bethanians, we have not yet opened the nursery or offered separate Sunday morning programming for children. Now that vaccination has been authorized for 5-11 year olds, we will be looking at increasing children's and family programming in 2022. Watch for more details soon.

Pastor Paul continues to record video messages for children each week which can be viewed through our website. Check out this week's message at: <http://bethanyofbainbridge.org/>

Confirmation Class

The 2021-22 Confirmation Class continues to meet at Woodward Middle School during early release on Monday. Class dates for the next two months are November 15, November 29, and December 13.

Bethany Lutheran Preschool Celebrates Halloween!



BETHANY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Helpline House Senior Gift Cards

Helpline House is once again collecting gift cards to give to Bainbridge Island seniors during the holiday season. Helpline has asked the Bethany community to help provide gift cards in the amount of \$25 from four local vendors: Eagle Harbor Book Store, Safeway, Town & Country, and Amazon. Helpline House will distribute the gift cards December 13th-23rd and would like to receive them by December 7th. Pastor Paul is challenging us to provide 25 gift cards, each in the amount of \$25, to support Helpline's efforts. You can bring gift cards to Debbie in the office starting today and until Tuesday, December 7th. Debbie's office hours are Monday-Thursday, 9am-3pm.



Supporting Lutheran Community Services Northwest



Lutheran Communities Services Northwest (LCSNW) is incredibly grateful for the amazing response to their request for kitchen, cleaning, bathroom and personal care kits to help Afghanistan refugees who will be coming to the area. Because of the lengthy process of paperwork

and transportation, the timeframe for individuals and families to arrive in the Pacific Northwest can be weeks or even months. At this point, LSCNW has limited storage space for donations of kits. The greatest need right now is for monetary donations that can assist with rent, utility payments, and other transitional expenses. If you would like to make a donation in support of the Afghan resettlement efforts visit their website at <https://lcsnw.org/>.

THE GREATER CHURCH



From the Bishop

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

The ELCA's Statement of Purpose is found in every congregation constitution, every synod constitution and in the ELCA Constitution. In the ELCA Constitution (4.01) we read: "The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world." This same Statement of Purpose is found in the NWWA Synod Constitution S6.01 and in the Model Constitution for Congregations C4.01. I encourage you to read ELCA's entire Statement of Purpose. It is beautiful and energizing. (Find the constitutions here: <https://www.lutheransnw.org/resources/constitutions>)

When I read the Statement of Purpose, it helps me remember who and whose I am and what I am called to do and to be. You see, sometimes we forget. Sometimes we forget what it means to be children of God, redeemed by Christ, and sent into the world. Sometimes we get caught up in finances or building maintenance, we get lost in petty disagreements and who should do what and so many other things, that we forget that we are created, empowered, called, and sent by God – by GOD – to live into and to share what God is already doing in the world – in God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying work in and for the world.

How do we live into this Statement of Purpose?

Below I propose three ways that we can (there are many more but I only have so much space).

Relationship: There are so many people in this world who are lonely, who are discouraged, who are anxious, who are tired. There are so many who feel unloved, unwelcomed, unwanted. They are living in your neighborhood, they are shopping at your grocery store, they have kids in school with your kids or grandkids, they are walking by your church every day. They are looking for relationship and for friendship. In a 2019 survey by CIGNA, 61% of working people identified as lonely. Did you catch that? Over half of people who are working are lonely. And this survey was taken before the pandemic. I can only surmise that the number is higher after 18 months of COVID life. Other studies I have read state that loneliness and isolation lead to physical and emotional difficulties as well as societal polarization. This is obviously a problem in this country. So, how do we have deep meaningful conversations so that people feel welcome and heard? Have connection and deep friendship? How does this fit with our Statement of Purpose?

Impact: There are so many people in this world who are looking to do something meaningful, to change the world for the better. There are so many people who wonder

how they can make a difference, how they can positively influence their communities locally, nationally, and globally. These people are living in your neighborhood, they are shopping at your grocery store, they have kids in school with your kids or grandkids, they are walking by your church every day. They are looking for impact in this world. How can they be our partners in the ministries we are already doing and in the ministries they are doing? How can we listen to them to hear what other ideas might come through the Holy Spirit working in them and through their innovation? What partners do we need to multiply the impact of your ministry site in your neighborhood? How does this fit with our Statement of Purpose?

Transformation: There are so many people in this world who are looking for transformation, for new life, for a new path. There are so many people who have lost hope in institutions, in the church, in their lives. These people are living in your neighborhood, they are shopping at your grocery store, they have kids in school with your kids or grandkids, they are walking by your church every day. They are looking for resurrection. How is your ministry site set up to not only welcome those searching, but honoring who they are? How do they know that their story is welcome? How is the good news shared with those who have never heard it and are desperate to hear? How does this fit with our Statement of Purpose?

I invite you to look at ELCA's Statement of Purpose – or your own congregation Statement of Purpose and discuss in your councils, Adult Forums, small groups, and elsewhere. What other questions or thoughts come out of what you read?

Together may we live drenched in God's love and sent out to share the Good News. For we are created, redeemed, called, and sent to live into and share in God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

+Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee
bishop@lutheransnw.org

(Birthdays and calendar on next page.)



November

Cindy Beam	11/6	Max Carlsen	11/15	Marty Milander	11/20
Dick Coar	11/6	Carolyn Milander	11/17	Fred Truitt	11/20
Wayne Daley	11/6	James Sutton	11/18	Florence Gubsch	11/23
Ed Kushner	11/13	Harry Wetzler	11/18	Brad Kerchner	11/25
Peter Miles	11/13	Isaiah Drov Dahl	11/19	Connie Yenne	11/29

The Month Ahead

2021 CALENDAR YEAR	NOVEMBER CALENDAR MONTH						SUNDAY FIRST DAY OF WEEK
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
01 Non-Bethany events in Itasca FH - Fellowship Hall	01 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH	02 10:00am: Rachel Circle Bible Study followed by Quilters, FH			05 12 Noon: Alton, Sanctuary	06 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship	
07 10:00am: Worship followed by coffee fellowship	08 9:30am: Women's Bible Study, member's home 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH	09 8:00am: Men's Bible Study, FH 10:00am: Quilters, FH 7:00pm: Council Meeting, FH	10 12:00pm: Altar Guild Brown Bag Lunch, FH 7:00pm: Bethany Choir		12 12 Noon: Alton, Sanctuary	13 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship	
14 10:00am: Worship followed by coffee fellowship	15 2:00pm: Confirmation Class, Woodward 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH	16 10:00am: Quilters, FH	17 7:00pm: Bethany Choir		19 12 Noon: Alton, Sanctuary	20 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship	
21 10:00am: Worship followed by coffee fellowship	22 12:00pm: Preschool Thanksgiving Feast, Classroom 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, FH	23 8:00am: Men's Bible Study, FH 10:00am: Quilters, FH 12:00pm: Preschool Thanksgiving Feast	24 10:00am: Garden School Thanksgiving Assembly, FH & Sanctuary 7:00pm: Bethany Choir	25 Thanksgiving, Office closed	26 12 Noon: Alton, Sanctuary	27 5:00pm: Evening Worship, followed by wine & cheese fellowship	
28 10:00am: Worship followed by coffee fellowship	29 2:00pm: Confirmation Class, Woodward 7:15pm: Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall	30 10:00am: Quilters, FH					