

Life Together

**Bethany Lutheran Church's
e-newsletter
November 2022**



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.

Sunday Worship & Sunday School

10 a.m. followed by coffee fellowship & Adult Ed

Saturday Worship

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

Website

bethanyofbainbridge.org

PASTOR'S ADDRESS

Returning Thanks

By Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers



Dear Bethanians,

November is a month bracketed by thanksgiving. Its first day, November 1st, is All Saints Day, a time when we remember with grateful hearts and wet eyes, the faithfully departed. This year we did so again as a community, lighting candles and naming names as a portion of our worship. This is a wonderful opportunity to rehearse those names, and that thankfulness with your children.

Then again, toward the end of the month we focus, as families, as a congregation, as a nation, on Thanksgiving. Fast forward to feasting, family, fellowship, (football), but include "faith" in your Thanksgiving plans as the Bethany community will gather for worship on Wednesday, November 23rd, to center our thanksgiving in God's generosity.

In the rhythm of our lives of gratitude, our thanksgiving is not limited to these occasions. Ours is not an "occasional" giving thanks, but a constant "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances." (1 Thes. 5:16) Every time we celebrate Holy Communion, we participate in the Great Thanksgiving (Eucharist), and indeed every time we eat a meal, we give thanks. Martin Luther, in his Small Catechism, instructs us to pray with thanksgiving every morning and evening, as well as before and after each meal. After each meal, he calls it "returning thanks."

(Continued on next page.)

Council leaders



Vicki Browning,
president,
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Lynn Nordby,
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Jennie Harris,
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Jim Rohrscheib,
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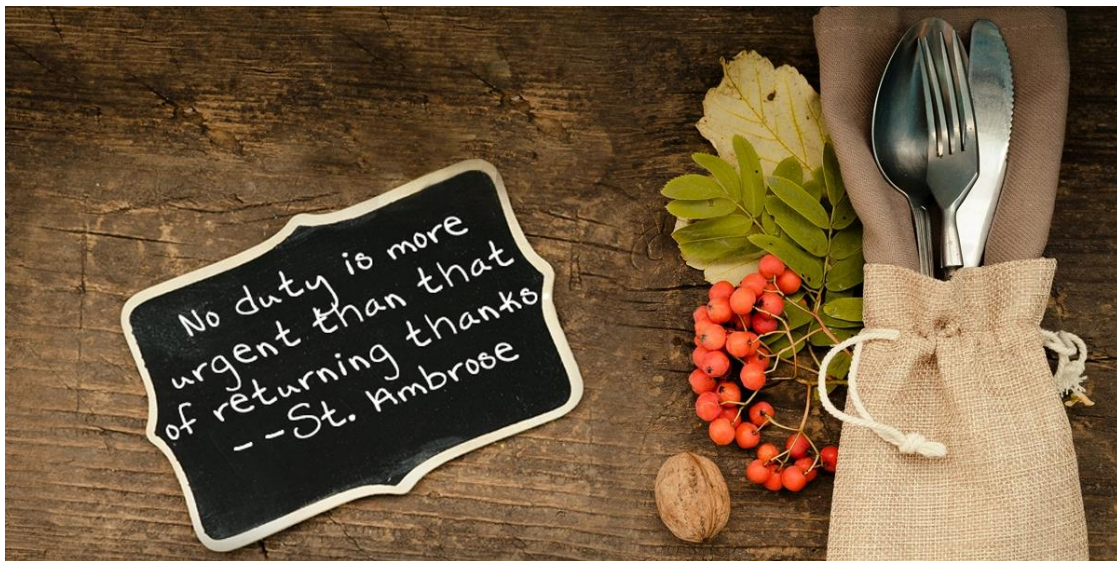
Returning Thanks: *Continued*

Every day in November, every day of every month gives us the opportunity to “Return Thanks.” That is especially true this month, as Bethany “returns” to its sanctuary for worship on November 20th. It rings true as we “return” as a community to worshipping together indoors after two and a half years of intense concern over Covid-19 (since it is almost 2023), and “Return Thanks” is the theme of our stewardship effort this year, responding at a crucial and opportune time in Bethany’s ministry with generosity.

I hope that you will join the Bethany community in this great “return”, a homecoming response to the grace God has first shown us.

Returning Thanks,

Pastor Paul (pastorpaul@bethanyofbainbridge.org)



PASTOR FOR FAITH FORMATION

The Act of Giving Thanks

By Pastor Erin Grayson



Dear Bethanians,

In her book, *Grateful: The Transforming Act of Giving Thanks*, author Diana Butler Bass challenges readers to think of gratitude as more than a sentiment and instead, to consider gratitude as an active response to God's gift of grace in our lives. It's good to *feel* grateful, but it's even better to *act* grateful.

As you might imagine, there are as many ways to act grateful as there are blessings in our lives—in other words, there are innumerable ways! Any activity that you are compelled to participate in as a result of the abundance of grace in your life counts as gratitude. For example, prayers of thanksgiving are an act of gratitude. Helping to feed the community at Super Suppers or at Helpline House is an act of gratitude. Voting and encouraging neighbors to vote is an act of gratitude. Making quilts and school/baby kits? You guessed it. An act of gratitude.

Studies show that an “attitude of gratitude” changes our brains for the better and enhances our overall health, so imagine the power in the “activity of gratitude” to change the world!

During the month of November, we focus on gratitude as we celebrate the blessings of family, friends, and neighbors culminating in a feast on Thanksgiving Day. As the congregation of Bethany Lutheran Church, we have many blessings to celebrate this November: the re-gathering of our community after two long years of pandemic-induced social distancing, new members joining the congregation, the moving forward of the affordable housing project (an act of gratitude itself!), the happy sound of children in Sunday school, and...a newly remodeled sanctuary!

How might we actively respond in gratitude to these gifts of grace? As we prepare to return to the sanctuary for worship, one thing comes to my mind: we can radically welcome each other back as an expression of gratitude. We have the perfect example of what radical welcome looks like in Jesus who went out of his way to make space for everyone to be seen, loved, and assured that they belonged as a beloved member of God's family.

Like gratitude, welcome is more than just a sentiment—it's an activity. It's not enough just to say that everyone is welcome; we have to show it! And sometimes that involves physically making a space for everyone. That's why we're working on creating a dedicated space for the youngest members of our church family in the sanctuary. This area will not take the place of nursery and Sunday school, it will simply offer another option to those families who wish to remain in worship together.

The Act of Giving Thanks: *Continued*

The idea is rooted in the latest youth ministry literature which suggests that when we constantly send children out of the sanctuary, we unintentionally send the message that they don't belong there. If the current Pew research statistics are accurate, we can conclude that they often don't return to church at all.

Besides having a quiet area for young children and their families in the sanctuary, I wonder what other ways we can make people feel welcome at Bethany Lutheran Church as an expression of our gratitude—perhaps especially those who have been marginalized, like those with disabilities, or our LGBTQIA siblings? What about the greater community? How do we communicate that there is a place for everyone, right here among us, just as Jesus showed us?

This November, we have a unique opportunity to return to the sanctuary which itself is a symbolic act of returning to God to give thanks for the abundant gifts of grace in our lives. Although it's a return, it's not "looking back." In fact, it's "looking forward" with hope as we grow together, deepening our faith in the One who is the giver of every perfect gift. In grateful response, let us open the doors of our hearts and of our church with the radical welcome that Jesus taught us. There's a place and space enough for us all. I can't think of a better activity of gratitude.

Yours in Faith,

Pastor Erin

P.s. On November 13 and 20, the Adult Education class will dive into the tenets of Diana Butler Bass' book, *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*. Please join us for a 30 minute discussion directly following worship to continue the conversation!



FROM THE COUNCIL

Update from the President

*By Vicki Browning
Council President*



It is time to stop and take a moment to think about all we are thankful for.

Where to begin?

The individuals who step up to provide hospitality after services on Saturday evening or Sunday morning; the people who have dedicated time and talent to spend hours working with the contractors on the sanctuary rejuvenation; the wonderful people who run the preschool with love and compassion; the taskforce who has diligently stuck with the project to get city council to approve the ordinance that will allow Bethany to move forward with affordable housing. I can't help mentioning those brave souls who took out the dead tree in front of the fellowship hall windows. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the quilters and the dedicated people who prepared the school kits and baby packets for Lutheran World Relief. I am thankful for all of those who have contributed to Martha and Mary to show those dedicated people that we appreciate them. This is to just name a few. How about the people who count the money and the people who sing in the choir and those behind the scenes we often take for granted? I am grateful for all of you who complete the time and talent survey, so we know who is willing to share their time and talents. I am grateful for everyone who has prayerfully considered their stewardship to continue God's work, both time and talents as well as finances.



Baskets for Martha & Mary fundraiser

Keeping thankfulness top of mind this November, we will celebrate together on the 20th. There will be a celebration lunch following the Sunday morning service to celebrate moving back into the sanctuary. It was a tedious project with a vision that has now come to fruition. It is also a day to celebrate having Pastor Erin on board and to highlight our stewardship campaign. Please remember that stewardship of our time and talents is just as important as our financial stewardship.

I am thankful to be a member of Bethany Lutheran Church.

BETHANY NEWS

Sanctuary's new design combines function with beauty

By Rachel Pritchett

Chair, Bethany Design Committee



While the Bethany congregation was adding insulation to the sanctuary ceiling to prevent further condensation and dripping, it seemed a good time to spiff up the room in general. That meant replacing inadequate lighting, outdated audio-visual equipment and worn carpet and paint. That piece of the project was taken on by the Design Committee. Here is a little about what we did. We hope you like the result.

Lighting: We will have more lighting in the sanctuary than ever before, by far. Good-bye, dim worship space. Eight large, stunning fixtures above the pews will greet you when you enter our completed sanctuary. Traditional, yet simple and modern, they will float on sturdy bronze chains on a single plane. They will boast brushed glass bowls with subtle marbling. Soaring above these beauties will be 16 canister lights. These powerful lights are the workhorses of our arrangement, so powerful that they will be capped with small louvers so there is no possibility of glare. Everything will be on dimmers, so that we can adjust them to be bright for study, or cozy for contemplation.

We will have a completely new lighting configuration in the altar area. You'll notice a new bank of small, targeted lights shining down on steps in the center. They are to illuminate the Bethany Choir. Small, targeted lights also will be added to illuminate the piano/organ area, the pulpit, the altar, and the baptismal font. In addition, we've added a utilitarian light behind the sacristy wall on the left for added safety and ease of getting around in this crowded corner. All the lighting in the altar area has been selected and situated so that there will be no more annoying glare on the window behind the altar. The lighting in the altar area also is on dimmers. Every light in the sanctuary is LED, of course.

Carpet: The carpet is a very tough commercial grade featuring a pebbled surface of off-white, light tan, dark tan, light blue and dark blue to coordinate with our blue pew chairs. The overall effect is much darker than we've had previously. It has tough padding underneath and is treated to resist stains. It is a polypropylene product, which is indestructible.

Paint: The wood slats on the ceiling are gone. Now white covers the walls and ceiling. It's a white we think is fresh and welcoming, but also warm. We did this by choosing a hue that had suggestions of beige and gray. The finish has a subtle sheen on it to resist scuffs. We also had some unfinished framing for the new clerestory windows built out, and had the frames stained. We enjoyed a spirited discussion on whether to paint the large beams in the sanctuary, each side presenting good arguments, but the majority asked that the beams be left as they are.

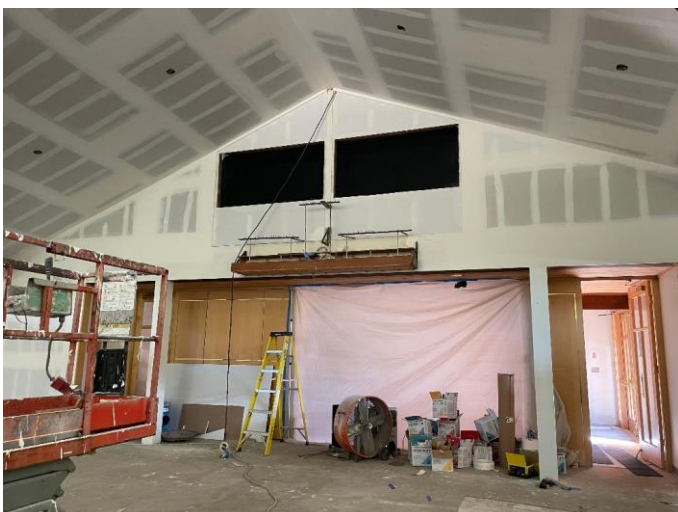
Audio-visual: The new configuration will consist of two large, state-of-the art speakers that will be suspended in front of the altar area facing out to the pews. What you can't see is a new noise-cancellation unit, which will do away with any echo or screeching from the mics. We purchased an up-to-date projector. The controls for all the audio-visual equipment and the

lighting has been relocated to the southeast corner in the back of the sanctuary. The mixer will be located to that corner now. A lot remains to be done to strengthen the audio-visual in the sanctuary. First off, I challenge the congregation to get strong and consistent wifi for that space, and to get live-streaming. Those are essential.

Pew chairs: We are having the pew chairs professionally steam-cleaned to remove built-up dirt, wax, and stains.

This work, which spans two years, reflects the love of Jesus Christ by the Bethany congregation and by members of the Design and Roof committees, and our combined faith that Bethany will continue to be a vibrant place of worship for many years.

Thanks to the Roof Committee for its expertise on the ceiling and insulation work that solved the nagging condensation problem. And thanks to my Design Committee, for all their hard work. That includes Nancy Wetzler on the carpet, Benay and Lynn Nordby on the lighting, Whitney Lane on paint, and Dave Christensen and Veronika Rohrscheib, along with many others. A special thanks goes to Jeff Jensen, for expert and detailed help on the electrical and audio-visual.



BETHANY IN THE COMMUNITY

Senior Ministry

Do you have some free time on Thursday afternoon and wonder how to spend it? Please consider joining me at Madison House at 1:30 for a time of devotional worship, hymn singing, and visiting with residents, many of whom are not able to attend worship on Sunday mornings. One resident recently thanked me for coming and said, “This is our church!”

The ecumenical ministry has been an islandwide tradition for over 20 years, and is currently led by Deacon Dan Fowler of St. Barnabas, and shared by Rev. Erin Grayson of Bethany Lutheran, and Rev. Nicole Chilivis, local Presbyterian chaplain. Volunteers from any/all faith communities are welcome to join us—the residents enjoy meeting new people and the leaders appreciate the spirit of the volunteers. No special training is required, no advance notice is needed, just come as you are and be moved by the spirit (I always am!). Questions? Please contact Pastor Erin at pastorerin@bethanyofbainbridge.org.

Rev. Erin Grayson, PCUSA (*she/her*)

THE GREATER CHURCH

From the Bishop

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

I just spoke with one of my friends who attended seminary with me. She is a pastor in the Midwest. And she is a great pastor. She is warm. She is funny. She loves Jesus. She loves the church. She loves Church so much that she used to attend three different Lutheran churches in a weekend (not counting the church she serves). She feels called by God to be a pastor. But today I had a phone call from her. She was crying. And she said to me (as a friend – not as a bishop), “The thing is I don’t get that much enjoyment out of pastoring for the work involved except God probably wants me to do it. Knowing that is some consolation.”



Recently I heard Pastor Dan White speak about pastor burn-out on a podcast:

“I mean, I’m seeing pastors every week who would never have considered rethinking their call as a pastor, who are doing that every week. And it’s just because things are so broken and hurting and exhausting, and they’re faced with that question now. And they never had to face it before. So I think it’s just kind of

flipping over the apple cart, and everything is kind of being questioned.” *The New York Times Podcast First Person, July 21, 2022*

According to Barna Group*, two out of five pastors have thought about leaving ministry in the last year. This is remarkably higher from previous years. What is the difference? According to Barna, the top reasons include stress, loneliness, and political division. While these three reasons are not new, we know that Covid compounded some of the tensions that already existed. We know that the last two and a half years have grayed relationships in ways we did not expect. As Bishop, I know that pastors are leaving congregations at a faster pace than I have ever experienced and the three reasons above are often the reason.

Oof! This makes me sad and anxious. This isn't how pastoring is supposed to be. As I tell people in premarital counseling, "Sometimes life is hard. Sometimes a relationship is hard. But neither life nor marriage should be hard all the time. Most of the time your relationship should make life better." And the same holds true for being a pastor. Sometimes pastoring is hard. But it shouldn't be hard all the time.

So how can we help pastors, and other leaders, who are experiencing stress, loneliness, and political division in the congregation?

If we continue to look at Barna research, it appears that pastors who continue to feel called to ministry responded that even though they might be experiencing stress, loneliness, and political division, they also have support through family, community, and other strong relationships.

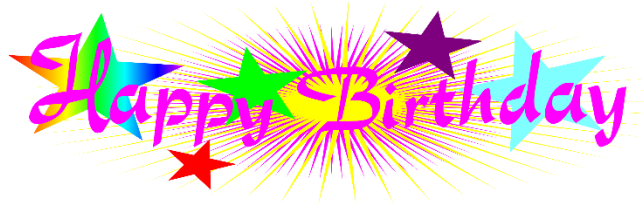
How can this happen? How can we build mutually caring and loving relationships with one another? How can we rebuild what Covid frayed? How do we best support and encourage our pastors, deacons, and lay ministry professionals? How can we, together, be the body of Christ for one another?

I'd love to hear your suggestions. What are your thoughts? You are welcome to email me at bishop@lutheransnw.org.

May we mutually uphold and support one another as siblings in Christ.

+Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee
bishop@lutheransnw.org

**Barna Group is a private, non-partisan, for-profit research organization. This particular research comes from the online article, "Pastors Share Top Reasons They've Considered Quitting Ministry in the Past Year," April 27, 2022*



November

Cindy Beam	11/6	Ed Kushner	11/13	Isaiah Drov Dahl	11/19
Dick Coar	11/6	Peter Miles	11/13	Marty Milander	11/20
Wayne Daley	11/6	Jim Sutton	11/18	Fred Truitt	11/20
Jan Thrun	11/7	Harry Wetzler	11/18	Connie Yenne	11/29

December

Fred Whittlesey	12/2	Fiona Johnson	12/14	Benjamin Ellerby	12/23
Selina Johnson	12/3	Heather Ballaine	12/15	Marty Dasler	12/24
Barbara Swartling	12/3	Charlene Selvar	12/15	Carol Reitz	12/26
Julia Jukubik	12/5	Caleb Grayson	12/20	Alec Stauffer	12/27
Sonja Selboe	12/13	Bill Brumley	12/22	Mark Drov Dahl	12/28
Carol Fenner	12/14	Calvin Kelly	12/22	Dawnae Whittlesey	12/28

November Worship Assistants

Altar Duty:

Date:	Name:
November 5/6	Gail Christensen
November 12/13	Barbara Swartling & Vickie Bech
November 19/20	Nancy Wetzler
November 23	Gail Christensen
November 26/27	Nancy Wetzler

Saturday Evening Worship:

Date:	Task:	Name:
November 5	Usher/Greeter	Joe Sommerseth
	Lay Reader	Barbara Michael
	Hospitality Host	Jim & Veronika Rohrscheib
November 12	Usher/Greeter	Carol Fenner
	Lay Reader	Gail Christensen
	Hospitality Host	Gail & Dave Christensen
November 19	Usher/Greeter	No Saturday Service
	Lay Reader	No Saturday Service
	Hospitality Host	No Saturday Service
November 26	Usher/Greeter	Jennie Harris
	Lay Reader	Jennie Harris
	Hospitality Host	Marlene & Al Orwiler

Sunday Morning Worship:

Date:	Task:	Name:
November 6	Usher/Greeter	Alice & Bruce McCain
	Lay Reader	Marcy Daley
	Communion Assistant	Wayne Daley
	Hospitality Host	Vicki Browning & Kristi Sutton
November 13	Usher/Greeter	Barbara & David Swartling
	Lay Reader	David Swartling
	Communion Assistant	Barbara Swartling
	Hospitality Host	Nancy Wetzler & Maria Marsala
November 20	Usher/Greeter	Debbie & Andy Rimkus
	Lay Reader	Tom Newlon
	Communion Assistant	Vicki Browning
	Hospitality Host	Celebration Lunch!
November 27	Usher/Greeter	Colleen & Steve Chupik
	Lay Reader	Barbara Deines
	Communion Assistant	Colleen Chupik
	Hospitality Host	Kathy & Doug Dudgeon

The Month Ahead

November 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Non-Bethany events in italics.		1 10:00am Rachel Circle followed by Quilters 10:15am Preschool Chapel 3:15pm BI Youth Choir 6:30pm Amabile Rehearsal	2 10:20am Preschool Chapel 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 7:00pm Bethany Choir	3 4:00pm BI Youth Orchestra	4 Noon AI Anon	5 5:00pm Worship followed by wine and cheese fellowship
6 10:00am Worship & Sunday School followed by coffee fellowship and Adult Ed	7 7:15pm Boy Scouts	8 8:00am Men's Bible Study 10:00am Quilters 3:15pm BI Youth Choir 6:30pm Amabile Rehearsal 7:00pm Council Meeting	9 Noon FFF Potluck 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 7:00pm Bethany Choir	10 4:00pm BI Youth Orchestra	11 Noon AI Anon	12 5:00pm Worship followed by wine and cheese fellowship
13 10:00am Worship & Sunday School followed by coffee fellowship and Adult Ed	14 9:30am Women's Bible Study 7:15pm Boy Scouts	15 10:00am Quilters 10:15am Preschool Chapel 3:15pm BI Youth Choir 6:30pm Amabile Rehearsal	16 10:20am Preschool Chapel 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 7:00pm Bethany Choir	17 4:00pm BI Youth Orchestra	18 Noon AI Anon	19 9am BI Quilters Retreat 5:00pm Worship followed by wine and cheese fellowship
20 Stewardship In Gathering 10:00am Worship & Sunday School followed by Potluck Celebration	21 Noon Preschool Thanksgiving Feast 7:15pm Boy Scouts	22 10:00am Quilters Noon Preschool Thanksgiving Feast 3:15pm BI Youth Choir 6:30pm Amabile Rehearsal	23 10:00am Carden School Assembly 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 7:00pm Thanksgiving Eve Service	24 Thanksgiving Office Closed	25 Office Closed Noon AI Anon	26 5:00pm Worship followed by wine and cheese fellowship
27 10:00am Worship & Sunday School followed by coffee fellowship and Adult Ed	28 7:15pm Boy Scouts	29 10:00am Quilters 3:15pm BI Youth Choir 6:30pm Amabile Rehearsal	30 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 7:00pm Bethany Choir			