

Life Together



**Bethany Lutheran Church's
e-newsletter
Fall, 2023**

**Pastor Paul Stumme-
Diers**

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206-842-4241

Pastor Erin Grayson

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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.

Worship:

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

Sundays, 10 a.m followed by
coffee fellowship (Sunday School
& Adult Ed)

Website:

bethanyofbainbridge.org

Get in touch:

Office:
info@bethanyofbainbridge.org
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PASTOR'S ADDRESS

The Language of Grace

By Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers



Dear Bethanians,

Last Sunday, as the congregation migrated from the sanctuary, having been fed by the Gospel where Jesus fed the 5,000 ("not counting women and children"), and fed by the bread and wine, the real presence of Christ in holy communion, many made their way to Madrona House.

The occasion was to celebrate the 100th birthday of Vince Mattson, whom I have heard described as "Bethany's biggest fan". Vince lives on the fourth floor, which rightly suggests that he is contending with memory loss. It was about two years ago that he no longer recognized me when I visited...although even before that he would regularly call me Pastor Marty.

So, given the memory limitations, how does a community help a guy like Vince celebrate 100 years? It does so through the many faceted "language of grace".

In this we take our cues from Jesus most importantly by being present. Thirteen people (more than I had told Madrona House leadership) gathered with Vince, making it clear Bethany was in the House present with/for him.

(Continues next page)

Council leaders



Vicki Browning,
president,
vickibrowning@
comcast.net



Lynn Nordby,
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lnordby@
msn.com



Jennie Harris,
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Eve Curtis,
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The Language of Grace: *Continued*

When words fail, or have a hard time adhering to the moment, there is music, a language that hits a unique place in memory, and touches the heart in a profound way, especially when led by Sylvia Cauter. Vince, who once sang in the Bethany choir, heard the strains of love and community in a language that was deeply familiar.

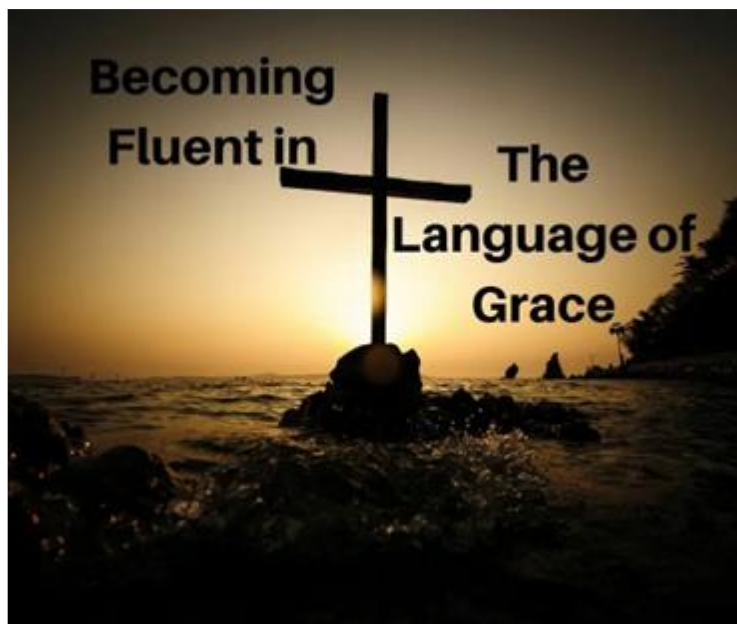
The language of smiles and laughter, the reassurance that he was among friends, was a gift marking this centennial celebration.

And the language of written cards and notes, like Scriptural Epistles speaking to God's love in the moment, but also keepsake evidence of that ongoing love and celebration. When I walked into his room the next day, cards and letters were posted on the wall, dozens of them, the majority from Vince's siblings in Christ at Bethany. The language of grace written on his dwelling, adorning his home.

When I spoke with Vince the next day, he had no memory of the visit by the Bethany Choir, even as the people around him spoke enthusiastically about it. But I have no doubt that this real presence of Bethany, of God's people gathered, was recognized by his spirit as the gift it was (to all involved, even the singers).

As I was again introducing myself, I told him I am the pastor at Bethany, the Swedish Lutheran Church. His eyes lit up and he lifted his head with joyful recognition and spoke a sentence in Swedish. The language of grace has many expressions, but for Vince that language is Swedish.

Pastor Paul



PASTOR FOR FAITH FORMATION

A Fall of Fresh Starts

By Pastor Erin Grayson



Dear Bethanians,

It's back-to-school time and I'm here for it! It's funny, the student in me will always enjoy the fresh start that September brings; and now as a parent of students, I live vicariously through their experiences as I peruse the aisles for back-to-school supplies.

Speaking of fresh starts, faith formation programs at Bethany Lutheran Church will begin anew in September. Check out the new "Faith Formation" bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for all faith formation activities scheduled this fall—including Adult Education, Sunday school, and youth and family events.

Adult education season kicks off on September 17 with two guest speakers from the Interfaith Council's "Climate Circle," which complements our September worship theme of Creation Care. We continue with a discussion-based book study on *The Life Worth Living: a Guide to What Matters Most*, by Miroslav Volf—the most popular course at Yale University. Other topics for discussion include a study on Mary Magdalene; a reflection on Indigenous People's Day with Sonja Selboe; and just in time for Thanksgiving, a fun round table discussion on how to talk "across the divide." During Advent, we'll enjoy a three-week study led by our own Fred Truitt. All are welcome to participate, no prior reading or preparation necessary!

Sunday school and monthly Impact gatherings are also set to begin on Sept 17 under the theme, "Compassion: Learning to Love Like God." Weekly Sunday school lessons will be centered on bible stories that illustrate God's compassion—and encourage us to live it out. The children's message in worship will be reflective of the Sunday school lesson, including a special memory verse for the whole congregation to memorize. Of note is that there will be no regular Sunday school the first Sunday of each month so children can be present for the entire worship service. On these Sundays, there will be ways for the youngest members of the congregation to be involved, including accessible and interactive prayers and special music!

Our first Impact gathering on September 17 will be a "Backpack Party," when we'll fill up backpacks for Lutheran World Relief and have our own backpacks blessed—so don't forget to bring yours! Many thanks to Alice and Bruce McCain who suggested it and who organized a Thrivent Grant to provide refreshments. The content of monthly Impact gatherings is designed for youth and families, but everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend these inter-generational gatherings when we enjoy a shared meal/refreshments, fellowship, community prayer, and a special activity. We gather in Fellowship Hall from 4:00-5:30pm. This fall, our gatherings are scheduled on Sept 17, Oct 8 (Blessing of the Animals), Nov 12 (Thanksgiving food drive). Our December meeting is TBD...stay tuned for more details!

(Continues next page.)

A Fall of Fresh Starts: Continued

As the season shifts, I'm looking forward to a fresh start with you, and praying blessings on your days. "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty, wrapped in light as with a garment... You have made the moon to mark the seasons..." (Psalm 104:1-2;19)

Pastor Erin

FROM THE COUNCIL

Update from the President

Vicki Browning, Council President



The Fall 2023 newsletter!

Fall is in the air. I feel the excitement as families prepare for school. Rally Sunday is coming to Bethany on September 10th and our theme is "Season of Creation". We will enjoy moving forward recognizing the wonderful creation around us. Our faith formation will be built on the theme as we enjoy the children worship sessions as well as the adult education. Be thinking about attending the adult education sessions, which will be starting on September 17th following worship on Sunday mornings.

September 10th will be our kickoff with a congregation potluck after the Sunday service. There won't be a service on Saturday evening as everyone will want to participate in the activities on Sunday morning. We will have opportunities to learn more about what it takes to be part of the worship services, quilting with the Rachel Circle, preparing goodies to serve after worship services, singing in the choir, planning fellowship events and much more. Come prepared to learn everything you always wanted to know while enjoying the potluck.

Finch Green is what the affordable housing project is being called and it is in the planning stages with community events planned. People will be encouraged to provide input regarding what they would like the community to be. Fundraising has begun with positive energy. The hard work continues with the formation of a dedicated board of directors in place.

Stewardship in time, talent and possessions will also reflect a season of creation. Thinking how we can each make a difference is key to the giving of our finances, our time, and our talents. Please prayerfully consider how you can make a difference.

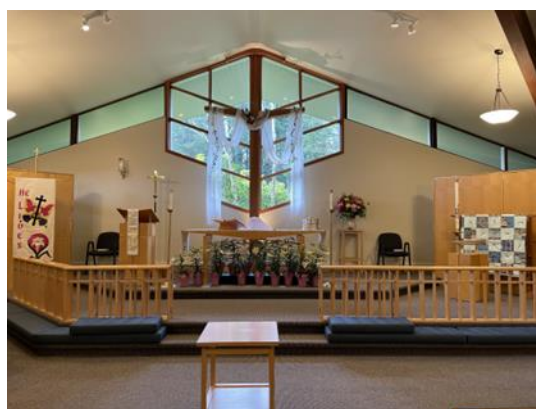
Let us welcome our new members as we celebrate a season of creation!

BETHANY NEWS

Join the Altar Guild!

Altar Guild is an integral part of Bethany's community life. The themes of service and fellowship best describe our ministry within the congregation and with one another. One of our primary, and most visible, services is to prepare the altar each week for Holy Communion. The Altar Guild also coordinates with our pastors to prepare the altar for other occasions in which Holy Communion is served, including seasonal and special services. We consider it a privilege to be a part of this sacrament that is so central to our weekly worship. In addition, we decorate the church for the seasons and events of the liturgical year, including Reformation Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost. Altar Guild meets six times a year, scheduled around those months when we need to make plans and arrangements for upcoming events. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each scheduled month, at noon in the Bethany fellowship hall. Everyone brings a sack lunch, with dessert and beverages provided by members who take turns serving as hostesses. One of the pastors leads us in devotions and we conclude with a brief business meeting. This is also a time for reconnecting and enjoying the fellowship of one another's company.

The first meeting of the 2023-2024 program year will be held on September 6, 2023. Just as all are welcome at the Lord's Table, all are welcome to participate in Altar Guild and share in this ministry of service and fellowship. We invite you to join us! If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to one of the co-chairs, Barbara Swartling (swarts4@aol.com) or Kathy Dudgeon (1sillymama@gmail.com).



Fall Bible Study

The Rachel Circle Bible Study group typically meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00am. The Women's Bible Study & Book Group typically meets on the second Monday of the month at 9:30am. The Men's Bible Study group typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8:00am. All Bible Study groups meet in fellowship hall. See next page for more information about each group.

Rachel Circle

The Rachel Circle meets monthly for Bible study with Pastor Paul or Pastor Erin. We will begin the new year with Bible study on Sept. 5, followed by a meeting and lunch. The lessons for the Bible study are available in the library beforehand. Quilting will begin on Sept. 12. We meet to quilt every Tuesday from 10:00 to 2:00 with a break for lunch (bring your own). Quilting on Tuesdays consists of tying and pinning, along with enjoying the fellowship of others. All are welcome with no quilting experience needed. If you are interested in providing tops, there is a lot of fabric in the basement.



If you like shopping at garage sales or the Goodwill we can always use items for the baby kits (sizes 6-24 months, no fleece, camo or patriotic fabric). Rachel Circle had lunch and Bible study with the ladies from Vinland in May. The baby shower held in June was a lot of fun and there were quite a few donations. If you have some time, we have lots of flannel sheets that need to be cut into diapers. Please contact Marlene Orwiler at (206) 683-5452 if you are interested.

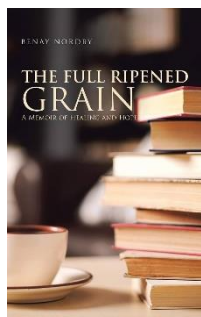
We'd like to thank the congregation for the contribution of supplies and money that make this outreach possible. We will be quilting during the fall, putting together baby kits and some fabric kits in October to get ready for shipping on Nov. 3 and 4. Many hands make light work.

Men's Bible Study Group

The Men's Bible Study group will continue to meet monthly for Bible study with Pastor Paul on the second Tuesdays of the month at 8am. The group enjoys breakfast treats while looking at the lessons for the upcoming Sunday worship. All Bethany men are welcome.

Women's Bible Study Group

On Monday, September 11 at 9:30 a.m. the Women's Bible Study group will meet up at Bethany to begin another year of reading, discussion, learning and fellowship. All are welcome, both new and returning readers.



In September we will discuss Benay Nordby's autobiographical book "The Fully Ripened Grain" and Benay will be our guest! Then in October, Maimu Truitt will have returned from a trip to Estonia, where much of her mother's story, "Antonia's Wars," takes place. At the October 9 meeting we will hear from Maimu and discuss "Antonia's Wars."

At least one copy of each of the books is in the church library for loan. Sonja Selboe has copies of Benay's book to share; contact Sonja (13selson@gmail.com).

Benay's book is also available to order online, and if you prefer using Kindle: https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18617367-the-full-ripened-grain-a-memoir-of-healing-and-hope?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=QYgGhjh4Fo&rank=1)

Imagine-we have published authors among us! Let's celebrate their good work as we begin our reading year.

BETHANY PRESCHOOL

Time to Celebrate!

Julianne Haggart, Preschool Director



It's hard to believe that summer is coming to an end. It has been busy! Only a few short weeks after our end-of-the-year celebration, we welcomed students back for our summer camp. Many of our students participated, along with a few new faces. It was a huge hit! The kids enjoyed three weeks of exploration, art, playing with friends, and popsicles! What could be better? All of our campers had a great time, and I received a lot of positive feedback from the parents. We even recruited a few new students who will be attending Bethany in the fall.

To get everyone excited for the upcoming school year, we have been connecting with Bethany preschool families every Wednesday in August for park playdates. We have had a good turnout so far, and it has been great for the kids and parents to connect before the school year begins. In addition to our playdates, our preschool staff have all been hard at work preparing for the return of our students. This begins with a deep cleaning of the school, checking inventory and creating classroom rosters. Next is planning and setting up of the classrooms!

We are looking forward to a great year and still have a few spots left in our 3/4 year-old class which takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:15-1:15. Please contact me at preschool@bethanyofbainbridge.org if you know of any families that might be interested in seeing what Bethany is all about.

Check out our amazing kids in the photos below and on the next page. Clearly it's going to be a great year!





THE GREATER CHURCH



From the Bishop

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

I went to the musical 1776 a few nights ago where I learned some new things about how the Declaration of Independence came to be written. As I watched, I felt proud to be an American – to be part of a group of people who wanted freedom from tyranny, freedom to vote, freedom from an empire far away.

There were also moments in this play when I was horrified at some decisions made. At the last minute, the clause to abolish slavery was removed so that all of the representatives would sign the document. The most powerful song in the musical, *Molasses to Rum*, reminds the audience how all the colonies were complicit in the selling of humans – not just the south.

As an American, I hold two realities. First, I rejoice in the wonder and aspiration of the United States of America. I am grateful for this country and I love what it is striving to be. At its best, it is a country where freedom and liberty are supreme. It is a place where care is given to those arriving on its shores. It is a place where people can freely go to church and other places of worship (or not go at all). In short, the United States is a promise of what can be.

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At the same time, I hold the truth of this country's sins. Enslaved men built the White House, the U.S. Capitol build, and others. Homes of former presidents including George Washington's Mount Vernon and James Madison's Montpelier were built by men "owned" by them. The land that we in the Northwest Washington Synod are living on was once land that belonged to Samish and Duwamish, Lummi, and Muckleshoot and many others. Japanese people were unjustly imprisoned during World War II. Sundown laws and redlining laws were written throughout this country. As a white woman, I know that I could not vote until 1919. For women of color, the right to vote did not come until later. People who are part of the LGBTQIA+ communities have been harassed and discriminated against, beaten up and killed in this country. And discriminatory practices and violence continue to this day. In short, the systems in this country have violated and harmed people since its inception.

This is what it means to be an American: to vote, to engage in civic society, to appreciate this country, to grieve past and present sins, and to truthfully stand up and speak when it falls short of its ideals.

But what about those of us who are American and also Christian? Unequivocally it means that as much as one might love this country, this is not where our ultimate allegiance lies. For we are part of the body of Christ that extends beyond the borders of any country. As Lutheran Christians, we know that we are named, chosen, and called by God through Jesus. We hold deeply the joy that we are freed from sin, and, because of this, we are called into radical love, acceptance, and welcome – far beyond being a citizen of any country. We are freed to love beyond racism, injustice, and bigotry. Martin Luther wrote that freedom is a gift from god, not just for our sake, or our country's sake, but for the sake of the world.

Tragically, there are those who want to distort this freedom. To somehow merge Christian and American identities. Rather than freedom, conflating religious authority with political authority leads to tyranny and marginalization – especially of minority groups. Christian Nationalism is neither patriotic nor is it faithful. You do not have to be Christian to be a "true" American. And you do not have to be American to be Christian. At its heart, it is idolatrous. As the First Commandment states, "You shall have no other gods."

Together, as faithful Christians, let us live into Jesus' words – into radical love, acceptance and welcome. Let us speak truth to power and stand with those without power. Let us follow Jesus who commands us to love everyone as our brothers and sisters and siblings including our fellow citizens, those of other belief systems, and those of other nations. Together, as faithful Christians, let us stand up and speak out against Christian Nationalism. And any system that marginalizes, harms, and subjugates another. As Jesus announces in the gospel of Luke, *'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'*

For freedom Christ has set us free. May we live and dance and revel in the freedom of Christ.

+Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee
bishop@lutheransnw.org



September

Steve Chupik	9/1	Patsy Cook	9/14	Tony Grayson	9/21
Jeff Jensen	9/1	Scott Lindquist	9/15	Claire Dasler	9/22
Tom Newlon	9/8	Allen Lang	9/17	Katie Drov Dahl	9/23
Craig Stauffer	9/9	Asher Paige	9/17	DeMar Sather	9/23
Gayle Robbins	9/10	Nico Lucioni	9/19	Ron Fenner	9/26
Peter Bang-Knudsen	9/13	Michele Mancuso	9/19	Susan Morris	9/28
		Jeff Sievertson	9/20		

October

Mattea Drov Dahl	10/1	Linda Stenberg	10/10	Drew Hansen	10/22
Sylvia Cauter	10/2	Jessica Wilson	10/15	Anne Howard-Lindquist	10/23
Marianne Milander	10/6	Casey Sheilds	10/16	Joe Michael	10/27
Alice McCain	10/8	Luanne Croker	10/17	Brighton Whittlesey	10/28
Chris Christensen	10/10			Hunter Whittlesey	10/28

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

September Worship Assistants

Saturday Evening Worship:

Date:	Task:	Name:
September 2	Usher/Greeter	Dick Coar
	Lay Reader	Carol Fenner
	Hospitality Host	Kathy & Doug Dudgeon
September 9 (No Saturday Service)	Usher/Greeter	N/A
	Lay Reader	N/A
	Hospitality Host	N/A
September 16	Usher/Greeter	Jim Rohrscheib
	Lay Reader	Jennie Harris
	Hospitality Host	Jennie Harris
September 23	Usher/Greeter	Charlene Selvar
	Lay Reader	Rachel Pritchett
	Hospitality Host	Carol & Ron Fenner
September 30	Usher/Greeter	Luanne & Tom Croker
	Lay Reader	Gail Christensen
	Hospitality Host	Veronika & Jim Rohrscheib

Sunday Morning Worship:

Date:	Task:	Name:
September 3	Ushers/Greeters	Barbara & David Swartling
	Lay Reader	Linnea Chu
	Communion Assistant	Linnea Chu
	Hospitality Host	Benay Nordby
September 10	Ushers/Greeters	Eve & Mike Curtis
	Lay Reader	Barbara Deines
	Communion Assistant	Barbara Deines
	Hospitality Host	Rally Day Pot Luck!
September 17	Greeters/Ushers	Alice & Bruce McCain
	Lay Reader	Linnea Chu
	Communion Assistant	Linnea Chu
	Hospitality Host	Karen Kushner & Vicki Browning
September 24	Ushers/Greeters	Debbie & Andy Rimkus
	Lay Reader	Andy Rimkus
	Communion Assistant	Vicki Browning
	Hospitality Host	Debbie & Andy Rimkus
October 1	Ushers/Greeters	Colleen & Steve Chupik
	Lay Reader	Claire Dasler
	Communion Assistant	Colleen Chupik
	Hospitality Host	Claire & Marty Dasler

(September calendar on back page.)

The Month Ahead

September 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <i>Noon AI Anon</i>	2 5:00pm Worship followed by wine and cheese fellowship
3 10:00am Worship followed by coffee fellowship	4 Labor Day – Office Closed	5 10:00am Rachel Circle Bible Study followed by Quilters	6 Noon Altar Guild Brown Bag Lunch & Meeting	7 9:00am Blood Drive	8 9:00am Blood Drive <i>Noon AI Anon</i>	9 2pm BI Youth Orchestra Auditions NO 5:00pm service
10 10:00am Worship followed by Rally Day Potluck! 2pm BI Youth Orchestra Auditions	11 9:30am Women's Bible Study & Book Group 7:15pm Boy Scouts	12 8:00am Men's Bible Study 10:00am Quilters 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 7:00pm Council Meeting	13 3:30pm BI Youth Choir	14 6:00pm BI Youth Orchestra Family Night	15 <i>Noon AI Anon</i>	16 5:00pm Holden Evening Prayer followed by wine and cheese fellowship
17 10:00am Worship followed by coffee fellowship 4:00pm Impact "Backpack Pary"	18 7:15pm Boy Scouts	19 10:00am Quilters 3:30pm BI Youth Choir	20 3:30pm BI Youth Choir	21 3:00pm BI Youth Orchestra	22 <i>Noon AI Anon</i>	23 5:00pm Worship followed by wine and cheese fellowship
24 New Member Sunday! 10:00am Worship followed by coffee fellowship	25 7:15pm Boy Scouts	26 10:00am Quilters 10:15 Preschool Chapel 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 6:30pm Amabile Choir	27 10:20am Preschool Chapel 3:30pm BI Youth Choir 7:00pm Bethany Choir	28 3:00pm BI Youth Orchestra	29 <i>Noon AI Anon</i>	30 9am BI Quilters Retreat 5:00pm Worship followed by wine and cheese fellowship