

# A Year to Celebrate & Give Thanks

## Bethany Lutheran Church Annual report 2023



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## MISSION STATEMENT

*To seek to do God's will through joyful outreach near and far,  
with hospitality toward all, and with spiritual growth that amazes.*

### IN THESE PAGES

#### *The Year in Review*

Welcome to your 2023 Annual Report! It has been a year filled with worship, with faith formation, with fellowship, with laughter and with tears.

In 2023, three people were baptized and six youth were confirmed. We added fourteen new members and grieved the loss of Wayne Richmond and Evan Stoll.

We watched Pastor Erin's ministry among us grow with Sunday School for children and a wide variety of Adult Forum offerings. We observed the season of Lent with soup suppers and a prayer wall in the sanctuary. In Advent we received daily poetry devotionals thanks to Fred Truitt.

There were concerts and fundraisers, summer BBQs and potlucks, multi-generational gatherings and fellowship outings. Bible study groups, Altar Guild and Rachel Circle met throughout the year. Preschoolers laughed and played and enjoyed chapel time with Pastors Paul and Erin. Numerous community groups rehearsed, performed, or held meetings at Bethany.

Towards the end of 2023, we learned our much beloved pastor will be retiring in early 2024. Now we look ahead to a year of transitions, a year of opportunity, a year of worshipping together, a year of faith!



— Debbie Rimkus, church administrator

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Pastor's Report</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Faith Formation Pastor's Report</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>President's Report</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2023 Annual Meeting Minutes</b>	<b>7-9</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>Bible Studies</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Boy Scouts</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Council Members</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CROP Walk</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>In Memoriam</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Music</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Preschool</b>	<b>17-19</b>
<b>Rachel Circle</b>	<b>20-21</b>
<b>Social Outreach</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Financial Report</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>2022 Balance Sheet</b>	<b>24</b>

## **LEADERS' REPORTS**

# Pastor: Day by Day

By Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers

*"Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever."*

-Prayer of the Day, Epiphany 2



In the course of cleaning out my office here at Bethany, I perused the pile of Day Planners I have accumulated in my years at Bethany, beginning with the Year of Our Lord 2009. It is quite a trip down memory and ministry lane, replete with the daily entries, those both routine and extraordinary, but each one centered in God's love made known in Christ. I am grateful for each one, and give thanks to God, and to the community with which I have shared these days.

I made an extensive list of these Day Planner activities, meetings, and visits which I will not bore you with in this report. It is enough to note that they extend from personal home visits to community worship events, from meetings at Bethany to meetings with non-profit Boards and church assemblies. They embrace interfaith relationships and the Bethany Preschool. They touch on all aspects of life, from baptisms to funerals, from confirmation to weddings, in sickness and in health, from refugees to affordable housing refuges, from COBI Council meetings to Advocacy Days in Olympia, from Ramblewood to New Orleans, to Tanzania. This is Christ's ministry, the daily ministry we have shared, and to which Bethany continues to be deeply committed.

Day by day is a mantra of the Al-Anon group that meets in our Fellowship Hall each week, a reminder of the importance of embracing the challenges and joys of each day. Day by day, as I turn the pages of my Day Planner, brings to mind JS Bach, who in composing would write at the top of each page, "Soli Deo Gloria", to the glory of God! Let that be written on the page of each of our days as we venture forth.

The prayer at the top of this page is the Prayer of the Day from last Sunday, and each year when we pray it on the Second Sunday after Epiphany I wonder if this prayer is one that originated in the church, or if it is derived from the song from Godspell, "Day By Day". In it we pray, we sing, "May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly, day by day."

*(Continued on next page.)*



I am grateful to the Bethany community for the years of ministry we have shared. I especially want to thank this year those with whom I have especially shared the “day by day” joys of church “work.” Debbie Rimkus, who provides professionalism and levity, an essential combination; Pastor Erin Grayson, with whom I have thoroughly enjoyed sharing the pastoral role; Sylvia Cauter, who simply puts our music and our community together through music in a dynamic way; to Katie Drov Dahl and Julianne Haggart, who in the preschool leadership have put me in joyful contact with their charges; to Vicki Browning, a force of faith and leadership. Day by Day, I give thanks.

Forever yours in Christ,  
Pastor Paul



## **LEADERS' REPORTS**

# Pastor for Faith Formation: A Year of Growth

By Pastor Erin Grayson



Faith formation offerings at Bethany developed and grew throughout 2023.

### **Faith Formation**

#### ***Impact***

In addition to regular Sunday school for children up to sixth grade, a new intergenerational program, Impact, began in January and continued throughout December—pausing briefly over the summer months.

Impact was designed as a program for youth and families to come together with people of all ages once a month on a Sunday afternoon for fellowship, conversation, and prayer over a shared meal, followed by a fun activity. We played Jenga and cornhole, collected seeds for a garden, had a backpack blessing, enjoyed a blessing of the animals, and made fun crafts for the Advent season—to name a few. We also supported social outreach initiatives including “growing a row” of tomatoes and cucumbers for Helpline and Fishline and assembling back-to-school kits for Lutheran World Relief. In November, we enjoyed a bring-your-favorite Thanksgiving side dish and collected food items for Helpline House.

#### ***Adult Education***

Adult Education programming in 2023 included a very well-received Lenten scripture study developed by Fred Truit and co-led with me. In addition to scripture study, Adult Education programs included a presentation by Suquamish Tribe Storyteller, Barbara Lawrence during Indigenous People’s Month, a book discussion on *Life Worth Living, A Guide to What Matters Most*, by Miroslav Wolf et al, a storytelling discussion on member (and author) Barbara Deines’ book, *Sleepy-Eyed Dreams*. We ended the 2023 season with an Advent study to mark the beginning of the Church year. Fred Truit graciously led the group in an interactive exploration of the meaning and history of Advent—in addition to offering a list of Advent poetry which was developed into a poetry devotional distributed to the entire congregation for reflection over the Advent season.

#### ***Sunday School and Nursery Care***

Sunday school and nursery care were offered to the youngest members of the congregation throughout 2023, with a short summer break. We used the Illustrated Ministry curriculum which is intentionally designed to be accessible to all ages for children as young as 4 up to 6th grade. As we grow in our faith, there’s always something new to learn, but the emphasis is on relationship building and how we experience God in each other. In addition to Sunday school, nursery care was provided by teen volunteers during the Sunday school hour. The children’s corner in the sanctuary—stocked with books and activities—remained available to children during the worship hour.



## LEADERS' REPORTS

# President: A Year to Celebrate



*By Vicki Browning, council president*

Wow! What a year we had. Our Faith and Family ministry under Pastor Erin was a blessing to behold.

Our two fundraising variety shows benefiting the earthquake victims and the Central Kitchen ministry were both hits.

The Affordable Housing Initiative made a big step forward with the establishment of the Finch Green LLC to manage the project in collaboration with Housing Resource Bainbridge.

The quilters out did themselves with the beautiful quilts, school kits and baby kits for Lutheran World Relief. The Bible study groups met regularly, and fellowship events were well attended. The choir continued to enlighten us all. The church council worked with a budget that met the needs of the congregation.

In the fall we began to focus on the retirement of Pastor Paul after 14 years as our beloved Pastor. What is next? Having Pastor Erin agree to remain as our care pastor is a true blessing. Now the discernment regarding where we focus next is upon us. We will form a committee with the help of the synod to guide us. Along with the sadness of saying goodbye, there is hope and excitement for the future!



## 2023 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

# Minutes from the Last Annual Meeting

*Submitted by Jennie Harris, Council Secretary*

Sunday, January 29, 2023, 11:00 a.m.

Council President Vicki Browning called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and an opening prayer was offered by Pastor Erin Grayson. The council president confirmed that there was a quorum of congregation members present.

**•MINUTES APPROVAL** – A motion was made, seconded, and adopted to approve the minutes of the 2022 annual meeting.

**•PRESIDENTS REPORT** – Council President Vicki Browning stated that she is excited about what is happening at Bethany. Her report included in the Annual Report points out all that the church has accomplished this past year – an updated sanctuary, the addition of Pastor Erin, and meeting our financial goals. She also mentioned the Affordable Housing Taskforce which has done so much to guide the project forward. Vicki also mentioned how wonderful it has been to work with Debbie Rimkus, the church administrator.

**•PASTORS REPORT** – Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers began his comments by giving thanks to all who have helped to shepherd the church this last year: Council president Vicki Browning; Jim Rohrscheib for his service as treasurer; Debbie Rimkus for her delightful spirit; Katie Drov Dahl for the leadership she provides for the preschool; Sylvia Cauter as she helps to lift our spirits and voices; Pastor Erin Grayson who represents a spirit of creativity and provides him support. He feels it's time to look past the way things have always been done and find ways to meet the current needs of the congregation. The affordable housing project may help to bring new families and ideas. He gave thanks to the congregation for their continued support.

**•FINANCIAL REPORTS** – Treasurer Jim Rohrscheib brought before the congregation a motion approved by the Council. It states, "The Bethany Church Council recommends the Congregation approve a 2023 spending budget of \$411,452". He pointed out the pledging history of the congregation for the last several years. For 2023 there were fewer pledges, but the average pledge was just a few dollars short of the record setting amount pledged last year. We have lost 6 of our more generous givers in the last year. The budget this year shows a \$37,986.00 deficit. Part of this will be covered by using the carry over funds from 2022 in the amount of \$23,531.00. Barbara Swartling asked about the funds for youth and family services. She hopes that we will not tie Pastor Erin's hands when it comes to funds for Faith Formation. McKenna Lang thanked Jim for his service. The budget was approved.

**•ELECTION OF NEW CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS** – Anne Howard Lindquist is retiring from the council. The following individuals have been nominated for election to the

Congregation Council: Linnea Chu (first term) and Jennie Harris (1 year). They were both elected by the congregation.

**•ELECTION OF 2023 NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS –** The congregation elected Alice McCain, Barbara Dienes, Wayne Daley, and Barbara Swartling to serve as nominating committee members.

**•AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE AND PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS-** David Swartling gave the congregation an update of the progress that has been made. The ordinance allowing increased density on the property was approved in October by COBI. We now can start to move forward. The church council has made a motion to accept the proposed action on behalf of the Affordable Housing Task Force which follows:

On Behalf of the Bethany Affordable Housing Task Force, the following motion is brought to the 2023 Annual Meeting:

1. To express thanks for and affirm the work of the Affordable Housing Task Force, and to request that it continue to shepherd Bethany's vision for affordable housing on its property; and
2. To endorse and ratify the preliminary Memorandum of Understanding between Bethany and Housing Resources Bainbridge (HRB), as approved by the Bethany Congregation Council, and to encourage ongoing collaboration with HRB in furtherance of Bethany's affordable housing vision; and
3. To endorse and ratify investigation and preparation of documents to form a limited liability corporation (LLC), and retention of Bainbridge Island resident Hayes Gori to serve as attorney on the project with the goal of presenting the LLC documents to the congregation for approval in the late winter or early spring of 2023; and
4. To authorize the Affordable Housing Task Force and the LLC, once established, to form a team of consultants as necessary to commence work on the process of obtaining Land Use and Building Permits; and
5. To authorize the Affordable Housing Task Force to begin fund development efforts, including: (a) exploration of and application for potentially available grants and other potential affordable housing revenue sources; (b) applying to the City of Bainbridge Island (COBI) for available ARPA funding designated for affordable housing by not already allocated to HRB; and (c) beginning fundraising in the Bainbridge Island community starting with covering the costs of initial permitting requirements.

Jonathon Davis was in attendance and clarified that the LLC is to be a nonprofit. Doug Love had a question regarding the LLC. There will be a congregational meeting to approve the LLC documents in the coming months. Though the Affordable Housing Task Force has received approximately \$140,000.00 from grants and other donations, the project will require extensive fund development. There was a question about where the funds that have been received are being held. They are tracked in a restricted fund through the Bethany financial database. The motion passed.



**•NEW BUSINESS – RECOGNITION OF A BETHANY VOLUNTEER** – Pastor Paul presented the following resolution in recognition of Jim Rohrscheib. The resolution was approved by a round of applause.

**A RESOLUTION IN CELEBRATION OF JAMES ROHRSCHEIB**

WHEREAS, Jim Rohrscheib has served as the Treasurer for the Bethany Lutheran Church longer than he (even though he is a “treasurer”) can count; and  
WHEREAS, in those years Jim Rohrscheib has seen more pledges than a national fraternity; and  
WHEREAS, Jim Rohrscheib faithfully attends worship each week (when the Mariners or Seahawks are not playing, that is); and  
WHEREAS, Jim Rohrscheib accounts for every nickel and dime, yet his accounting of dollars makes little sense; and  
WHEREAS, Jim Rohrscheib has unsuccessfully for 20 years tried to pass off his job; and  
WHEREAS, in his time, Jim has experienced administrator changes, pastoral transitions, mortgage renegotiations, church renovations, deficits and surpluses; and  
WHEREAS, even when with Veronika cruising, the Bethany numbers he is perusing.  
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that on this day we proclaim James Rohrscheib the Commander of the Counters, the Navigator of the Numbers, the Brewmaster of the Budget, the Steward of the (Steward)Ship, the Barron of Benevolence, and in doing so the Bethany Lutheran Community expresses its unrestrained thanks!

**•CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business, Pastor Paul invited everyone to say the Lord’s Prayer together. President Vicki Browning adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.



## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

# Translating a Vision into Reality

*By David Swartling and Tom Croker, affordable housing task force members*

As the calendar turned to 2023 a year ago, Bethany knew that it finally had received authority from the City of Bainbridge Island (COBI), implementing a state statute passed several years earlier, to commence planning to build an affordable housing community on its property. That action inspired a multi-faceted resolution adopted at the 2023 Annual Meeting to move forward on Bethany's affordable housing odyssey by taking a number of substantive and substantial steps. Indeed, Bethany's action then is proving to be a cornerstone now in moving an idea into a project!



Once authorization was provided a year ago, the congregation in April 2023 authorized formation of Finch Green LLC, a Washington non-profit limited liability company, to create and navigate a path forward for Bethany's vision. It was organized shortly thereafter and, in accordance with instructions provided by the congregation, Finch Green began working with consultants Jonathan Davis and Marja Williams. Their expertise has greatly facilitated the path forward and has led to remarkable progress. Not only did they lead in community relations efforts, but they helped navigate the critical interface with COBI. As 2023 ended, a pre-application process was underway, and it involved planning for and participation in a number of meetings with COBI to address site preparation and design issues.

The second momentous step in 2023 was translating our commitment to collaborate with HRB into a new reality. Indeed, this commitment is now embodied in a mutual agreement to participate with HRB in a shared capital campaign in 2024, i.e., one that will raise funds for both HRB's Erickson Avenue project (18 affordable homes) and Finch Green's plan (+/- 20 affordable homes on Bethany's property). Launch of this shared campaign has led to the creation of both a Campaign Committee and a Building Committee. The committees consist of both Finch Green board and Bethany members, as well as members of the HRB board. Additionally, Bainbridge Island's resident guru in planning building projects for non-profits – Ralph Spillinger – has graciously agreed to provide critical expertise as a consultant in translating a vision into a completed project! As this work ramps up, thanks to the following Bethany members for their service on the Finch Green Board and/or the Building Committee or Capital Campaign Committee: Tom Croker, Barbara Deines, Stephen Deines, Lynn Nordby, Debbie Rimkus, Jim Rohrscheib, Barbara Swartling, and David Swartling.

Now that the path forward has begun to be charted, a number of complex but important steps forward are on the horizon. Finch Green and HRB, with the advice of our consultants, will need to create and begin to implement a legal structure, as well as continue to navigate the complex processes and decisions for moving forward. This will take place as the combined capital campaign is launched. In asking the Great Lutheran Question this year ("What does this mean?"), the answer in 2024 will be similar to what we said in 2022 and 2023: "Stay tuned!"

## ALTAR GUILD

# A Ministry of Service and Fellowship

*By Gail Christensen (2022-23 chair), and Barbara Swartling & Kathy Dudgeon (2023-24 co-chairs)*

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. Our primary **service** is to prepare the altar each week for the Sacrament of 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 on the church calendar such as Reformation Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost. As we do so, we enjoy the **fellowship** of **servicing** together, preparing our worship space visually as we move through the liturgical year.

Preparation of altar flowers is another important (and visible!) **service** ministry that complements Communion preparation. If you're unsure of the logistics involved in arranging for altar flowers, Altar Guild can help! When you sign up to provide flowers for the sanctuary, you may choose to have Altar Guild prepare the arrangement. To do so, just mark the designated box on the sign-up chart and make a financial contribution using the envelope provided, and the flower team will take care of the rest.

Altar Guild meets six times a year, scheduled for those months when we need to make plans and arrangements for upcoming events. For the 2023-24 program year, the meetings are in September, November, and December (2023), and February, April, and June (2024). The recent December meeting featured a cookie exchange, including gathering of cookies that were distributed by Bethany carolers to our shut-in members. We will conclude the program year in June with a salad luncheon at a member's home.

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each scheduled month, at 12:00 noon in the Bethany fellowship hall. Everyone brings a sack lunch, with dessert and beverages provided by members who take turns serving as hostesses. A brief business meeting follows the meal. This is a time for enjoying the **fellowship** of one another's company as we plan for upcoming **service** opportunities.

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**. Any of those named below would be pleased to answer your questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Christensen, 2022-23 Chair

Kathy Dudgeon and Barbara Swartling, Co-Chairs for 2023-24

## Officers for 2022-2023

### Co-Chairs

Kathy Dudgeon &  
Barbara Swartling

### Secretary

Vickie Bech

### Treasurer

Barbara Swartling

### Scheduler

Nancy Wetzler

### Seasonal Decor

Ruth Bartunek

### Supplies Ordering

Barbara Michael

### Flowers

Rachel Pritchett

## Altar Guild financial report for 2022

Description	Receipts	Disbursements	Balance
Beginning balance Jan. 1, 2022			\$2,661.34
Altar Guild meeting offerings	67.00		
Easter Lily, Poinsettia and Flower Fund donations transferred from Bethany operating account	2,030.00		
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>\$2,097.00</b>		
Reimbursements to AG members for altar-flower expense		616.47	
Epiphany 2023 Expenses		-0-	
Easter 2023 Lilies & Flowers		460.75	
Christmas 2022 Poinsettias		20.00	
Christmas 2023 Poinsettias		326.01	
Thanksgiving Décor		53.38	
Contribution to Sanctuary Remodel		300.00	
Sacristy Supplies		215.37	
<b>Total disbursements</b>		<b>\$1,991.98</b>	
<b>Ending balance Dec. 31, 2023</b>			<b>\$2,766.36</b>

Note: This report represents a summary of Altar Guild account activity for 2023. The figures have been reconciled with Wells Fargo Bank year-end statement. They are subject to reconciliation with Bethany's financial database. Prepared by Barbara Swartling, Altar Guild treasurer





## **BIBLE STUDIES**

# Books, Theology, Faith and Friendships

*By Alice McCain*

Women who want to dig into books relating to theology – and life – get together monthly (usually the second Monday of the month) at Bethany, September through May, at 9:30 a.m. In this group faith and friendships deepen, and newcomers are always welcome. Coffee, tea and treats are shared at each meeting.



This fall we began the year with memoirs by two of Bethany's authors: Benay Nordby's "Full Ripened Grain" and Maimu Truitt's "Antonia's Wars." From November through January we covered the book "White Awake," a thorough discussion of racism and Christianity, by Daniel Hill. From February through May we will read and discuss two books by C.S. Lewis, "Screwtape Letters" and "Mere Christianity." At our June meeting we have a potluck picnic at the home of one of our members and discuss books to read for the next year.

If this sounds like a group you might enjoy, come and visit us (meeting announcements are in the weekly church news). Or you can contact Alice McCain (360.328.0920), Helen Stoll (360.620.2170) or Sonja Selboe (360.979.7985) for more information. We'd love to have you check us out.

## Men's Bible Study Met with Pastor Paul on Tuesdays

The Men's Bible Study met once a month on the second Tuesday at 8am in the fellowship hall, studying the Gospel texts from the Sundays before and after they met. In the late summer Pastor Paul provided a variety of blackberry breakfast treats, and in other seasons the fare is donuts, cereal, and bananas. The main course, however, was the fellowship surrounding our Gospel conversation.



## BOY SCOUTS

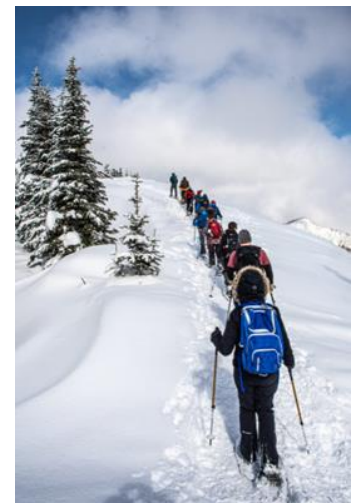
# Bethany's Troop in Action!

*By Doug Dudgeon, chartered organization representative, Troop 1565*

BSA Scout Troop 1565 celebrated 55 years of operation as a ministry of Bethany Lutheran Church. Out of a membership of 30 youth, 18 Scouts advanced in rank in 2023. This year's activities included snow caving, bike and canoe camping, backpacking, and summer camp on the Oregon coast at Camp Meriwether. Scout skills training included a focus on knots and pioneering. Older Scouts additionally took part in a week-long sailing adventure in the Florida Keys.



After 1½ years of service, Nathan Oestreich retired from the role of Scoutmaster at the end of the year. Nathan has been succeeded by Kyle Meidell, previously an Assistant Scoutmaster in the troop. The troop is grateful for Nathan's faithful leadership as Scoutmaster and, before that, Troop Committee Chair, as well as for the adults who continue to guide the troop's operation. The Scouts of Troop 1565 and their families thank the congregation for its gracious, continued support.





## **COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Thank you for your service in 2023.



**Paul Stumme-Diers,  
pastor**



**Erin Grayson,  
pastor**



**Vicki Browning,  
President**



**Lynn Nordby,  
vice president**



**Jennie Harris,  
secretary**



**Eve Curtis,  
treasurer**



**Linnea Chu**



**Allen Lang**



**Allie Paulson-Houser**



**Burton Shields**



**Kristi Sutton**



**Harry Wetzler**

## **CROP WALK**

### **Bethany Walks the Walk; Total is Over \$45,000**

The 2023 CROP Walk took place on Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. This is an annual ecumenical event on Bainbridge Island that raises money and awareness concerning issues of hunger, locally and globally. Church World Service is the sponsor of this three mile walk, and the bulk of the money raised goes on to their important work. Locally, 25% of the money raised supports local food banks at Helpline House (Bainbridge) and Fishline (Poulsbo). In past years, the youth of Bethany have been in charge of set-up and take-down of the course markers. We thank Burton and Zachary Shields who took on the leadership of course set-up. And a big thank you to Chris Christensen, who for many years has provided overall leadership for this walk!

## **IN MEMORIAM**



**Wayne Richmond  
4/2/2023**



**Evan Stoll  
8/23/23**



**As always, the Memorial Garden will be open for your moments of silence. If you would like to inquire about space, please call the office.**

## MUSIC

# Making a Joyful Noise

*By Sylvia Cauter, Music Director*

2023 has been a year of welcoming new faces into the Bethany Choir, as well as saying goodbye to other faithful members who have served as music ministers for decades. We joyfully share our voices and musical gifts with Bethany and the surrounding community as choir members, cantors, and worship participants. Several highlights this year included the 2023 fundraisers at Bethany to raise money for Syria and Turkey earthquake relief and World Central Kitchen. The choir played an active role in both of these fundraisers singing such hits as Rick Astley's "Never Gonna You Up".



Thank you to our outstanding accompanists, Chris Christensen, Julie Gallant, and Sam Brody, for their musical support and to all of the devoted members of the Bethany Choir. We look forward to welcoming new members on Wednesday nights at 7 PM for music, and fellowship. We are a lively bunch of folks!





## **PRESCHOOL**

# Bethany Preschool is Thriving!

*By Julianne Haggart, director*

Among our three classes, we serve thirty-one students from the Bainbridge Island/Suquamish/Poulsbo area. We continue to welcome younger siblings of returning families as well as several new families this year. Additionally, many of our current families have already made the decision to continue at Bethany and re-enroll for next year.



In 2023, we had some staffing changes at the preschool. Katie Drov Dahl accepted a position at Woodward Middle School as the Attendance and Athletics Clerk. Woodward is very lucky to have her and I know that she is making a positive impact on the students and staff. I am thankful that Katie's decision to accept the position at Woodward has given me the opportunity to become the new Director at the preschool. I love getting to come to work every day and be a part of such a wonderful, welcoming community. I am so thankful for the kind, loving, amazing teachers and co-workers that have made my transition especially smooth.

Additionally, Rachel Running and Valerie Johnson retired at the end of the school year. Together, they taught a total of 32 years at Bethany. The impact that they have made on the Bethany Lutheran Preschool community is immeasurable and they are definitely missed. Thankfully, they have agreed to continue as substitutes and have already made an appearance in the classroom. Selina Johnson has also retired from her bookkeeping duties. We have been so lucky to have her with us for all of these years and appreciate the time she has taken to train our current bookkeeper, Missy Rehder. Selina made the transition seamless and is always there to answer any questions we have.

We were able to offer three weeks of summer camp in 2023, to not only our current students, but to the community as well. I am grateful for the positive feedback I received from families. This would not have been possible if it weren't for our amazing staff who continue to be the foundation of our program. Currently, Allie McDonald and Missy Rehder teach the Grasshopper class; Brooke Russel and I teach the Firefly class; and Brooke Russel and Tracy Nilsen teach the Bumble Bee class. Tracy was new to the teaching staff in 2023. Her positive energy and go get 'em attitude is truly a gift. I hope Tracy will be a part of our staff for many years.

I am also especially grateful for our Preschool Advisory Board. Pastor Paul, Leanne Wetzel, Missy Rehder, Kristi Sutton, Shawna Paulson, Vikki Anderson, Katie Walton, and Lexi Bayley have been a huge source of guidance and support.

Finally, I am thankful for the support of the church, which enables us to have such a quality program for our students.

*(Preschool financials are on the next page.)*

## Preschool financials

	2022/23 budget	2022/23 actual	2023/24 budget
<b>INCOME</b>			
Tuition	\$68,310.00	\$64,424.00	\$80,000.00
Summer Camp	N/A	\$6,340.00	N/A
Snack Fee	–	\$2,857.00	N/A
Lunch bunch	\$4,160.00	\$5,425.00	N/A
Materials fees	\$2,700.00	\$2,688.00	\$3,000.00
Application fee	\$1,000.00	\$1,700.00	\$1,500.00
Registration deposit	\$7,440.00	\$9,029.00	\$8,000.00
Late Fees	–	\$(5.00)	–
Interest	–	\$224.62	–
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$83,610.00</b>	<b>\$92,683.12</b>	<b>\$92,500.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Payroll wages	\$64,000.00	\$66,897.90	\$72,000.00
Payroll taxes	\$4,900.00	\$4,474.07	\$4,900.00
L&I taxes	\$1,500.00	\$730.62	\$1,500.00
Paychecks fees	\$1,100.00	\$1,411.86	\$1,200.00
Insurance	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Phone	\$1,000.00	\$793.29	\$1,000.00
Repairs/maintenance	\$1,500.00	\$1,097.65	\$1,500.00
Capital improvements	\$1,750.00	\$717.42	\$1,750.00
Supplies	\$3,500.00	\$2,494.46	\$3,500.00
Snack	-	\$1,149.06	\$2,000.00
Events	\$1,000.00	\$1,867.06	\$750.00
Student memorabilia	\$650.00	\$250.45	\$650.00
Consultants	\$750.00	\$1,691.96	\$500.00
Donation to church	\$2,750.00	\$2,750.00	\$2,750.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$84,900.00</b>	<b>\$86,825.80</b>	<b>\$94,500.00</b>

Checking account balance: \$21,507.25

Contingency account: \$27,460.56

Certificate of deposit (Tuition advance): \$9,009.00



# Preschoolers at Play!





## **RACHEL CIRCLE**

# Fellowship through Service

*134 quilts, 113 baby kits and 84 school bags were shipped.*

*By Jennie Harris*

The Rachel Circle continues its ministry to provide warmth, comfort and needed items to refugees and others around the world. Our gifts have been sent as far away as the middle East and as near as the Dominican Republic. A couple of new twists to our gatherings was the baby shower held in June and the creation of the book bags at an Impact gathering in September. Both were well attended and such a blessing. We met with the quilters from Vinland in Poulsbo for bible study and lunch in May. As is mentioned in the report regarding the school kits, shelving was added to our storage room which has made it easier to find and store things as we wait for our shipping dates, usually the first weekends in May and November. We realize that not everyone is available on Tuesday mornings, but everyone is welcome. As noted in the Baby Care Kits portion, there are tasks that can be done at your own pace and in your own home with already donated materials.

The Rachel Circle thanks the congregation for their continued support – both financially and with prayers.

■ **Quilts:** The quilters have been busy again this year. We have worked every Tuesday and even worked during the summer, only taking August off. Thanks to your help, we were able to ship 134 quilts this year. We also sold two quilts, the money going to our expenses. We were able to send donations to Katies Fund (an endowment to support women's ministry in years to come) and we sent money to LWR Christmas Fund.

We purchased a step stool for our storage room in the basement so we no longer have to climb on a chair.

We have a great time every Tuesday. We would love to have you join us. Submitted by Carol Fenner

■ **Baby kits:** Once again, thank you to the congregation for supporting the Baby Care Kit ministry. Your financial support is much appreciated and much needed to keep this work going. Many individuals contributed monies, as well as their time. Cutting and sewing flannel for diapers, tee shirt diapers, as well as baby blankets is a huge help. Others also knit hats and cut/serge onesies to make into shirts. Thank you all. June 10, we had a shower for babies who will be recipients of LWR's mission. About 17 women attended and enjoyed games, refreshments and fellowship while the darling and useful baby items were set aside and included in the fall kits.

If you didn't sign up for helping with Baby Care Kits in 2024 it's not too late! Folks who can measure and cut, sew a straight line, pink edges, knit, crochet or love to shop for bargains are



needed and welcome. Feel free to contact Marlene at 206-683-5452 or email her at [almaro60@comcast.net](mailto:almaro60@comcast.net).

We continue to be blessed by support from Thrivent Choice dollars. In, 2023 we were able to ship a total of 113 kits and look forward to meeting or exceeding that in 2024!

■ **School kits:** This fall Bethany sent 84 school kits to LWR for kids around the world. This is no small feat- it “takes a village.” Thanks to all who participated: donating school supplies; sewing book bags; putting supplies in book bags, and preparing kits for shipping. This is the second year we received a \$250 Thrivent Action Team grant, which paid for some needed supplies and a work party on September 17. At that multigenerational “Impact” gathering young and old (and in between) enjoyed filling the bags and eating pizza. New shelving in the Rachel Circle basement room has been a godsend. Now school supplies can be stored together, with plenty of room for organization. Submitted by Alice McCain

### Rachel Circle financials for 2023

**Income**

Quilts (Bethany Budget)	\$400.00
Quilt Auction & Sales	\$90.00
Baby kits (Bethany Budget)	\$325.00
Baby Kits – Thrivent Card	\$250.00
School Kits – Thrivent Card	\$250.00
School Kits – Offering	\$20.00
Baby Kits – Offering	\$200.00
Rachel Circle Offering	\$200.00
Shipping offering	\$1,500.00
<b>Total 2023 Income</b>	<b>\$3,237.00</b>

Balance from 2022	\$2,406.59
<b>Total of all Income</b>	<b>\$5,643.59</b>

**Expenses**

Quilting – batting, fabric, needles	\$622.89
Baby Kits – clothes, soap, towels, pins	\$704.97
School Kits	\$270.00
Shipping	\$1,191.00
Donation to LIRS	\$100.00
Donation to Katies Fund	\$100.00
<b>Total of all expenses</b>	<b>\$2,988.86</b>

**2023 year-end balance for all Rachel Circle**

Balance of quilt fund	\$1,444.13
Balance of baby kit fund	\$932.70
Balance of school bag fund	\$207.87
Rachel Circle Offering	\$70.00
<b>Final total</b>	<b>\$2,654.73</b>



**Packing up the quilts and kits.**



**Boxed and ready to go!**

**SOCIAL OUTREACH**

# Bethany Continues Long Legacy of Giving

Here's where just some of Bethany's social-outreach and mission funds go, as well as the current status of the Bethany Mission Endowment Fund:

**Social outreach and mission**

Compass Housing Alliance	\$4,000
Helpline House	\$5,000
Island Volunteer Caregivers	\$1,000
Martha & Mary	\$1,000
Northwest Washington Synod, ELCA	\$42,000
Lutheran Community Services	\$1,000
Faith Advocacy Network	\$1,000
Lutheran Peace Fellowship	\$500
Reconciling Works	\$250
World hunger (ELCA)	\$1,000
Rachel Circle	\$400
Baby Kits (Lutheran World Relief)	\$325
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$57,975</b>

**Bethany Mission Endowment**

**Fund award recipients**

Bainbridge Island Senior Center	\$2,000
Church of Steadfast Love	\$1,000
BI-English as a Second Language	\$600
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia	\$300
Operation Bootstrap Africa	\$2,000

**Status of Bethany Mission Endowment**

**Fund**

As of Sep. 30, 2023

ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust	\$130,178
Bethany Mission Endowment Fund reserve	\$1,622
Cash value of two insurance policies	\$31,132
<b>Current Bethany Mission Endowment Fund total</b>	<b>\$162,932</b>



## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

*Compiled by Eve Curtis, treasurer*

While the number of pledgers has decreased from 110 in 2010 to 67 in 2024, the average pledge has increased from \$61.21 to \$80.90. Overall, the total amount of 2024 projected giving has decreased from \$388,639 in 2010 to \$337,178 expected in 2023. As can be seen in the data below, the number of pledges is up slightly from last year, and the amount pledged is essentially the same. This is very reassuring as we head into a year of transition.



The Bethany Church Council is extremely grateful to the congregation for the commitment to our community. Because of you, Bethany has been able to continue worship, Bible study, and other programs. We have been able to support our staff and honor our commitments to the ELCA and partner ministries. And we have been able to budget for 2024 with optimism as the church council and staff are committed to membership growth.

Our deepest gratitude and a huge thank you to all who gave in 2023!

### **2024**

69 pledges were received for \$286,086.  
The median pledge is \$58 per week.  
The average pledge is \$80.90 per week.  
25 non-pledgers are expected to give \$45,950.  
94 total contributors are expected to give \$337,178.

### **2023**

65 pledges were received for \$286,436.  
The median pledge is \$58 per week.  
The average pledge is \$84.74 per week.  
30 non-pledgers are expected to give \$61,315.  
95 total contributors are expected to give \$347,751. (Actual giving \$348,567)

### **2022**

70 pledges were received for \$321,226.  
The median pledge is \$55 per week.  
The average pledge is \$88.25 per week.  
36 non-pledgers are expected to give \$70,550.  
106 total contributors are expected to give \$391,776. (Actual giving \$406,807)

*(2023 Balance Sheet is on the next page.)*



## 2023 balance sheet

### ASSETS

#### Current assets

Bethany dedicated funds banked at Wells Fargo	\$75,451	
Bethany general funds banked at Wells Fargo	<u>\$82,415</u>	
<b>Total funds banked at Wells Fargo</b>		<b>\$157,866</b>
<b>Advance Giving</b>		<b>\$8,400</b>
<b>Endowment fund*</b>		
Endowment reserve	\$1,622	
Pooled trust	\$130,178	
Insurance policies	<u>\$31,132</u>	
<b>Total endowment fund</b>		<b><u>\$162,932</u></b>

#### Total current assets

**\$329,198**

#### Fixed assets

Building and grounds\*\* \$5,449,000

#### Total fixed assets

**\$5,449,000**

**\$5,778,198**

### TOTAL ASSETS

### LIABILITIES

#### Long-term liabilities

Church mortgage \$232,842

#### Total long-term liabilities

**\$232,842**

#### Dedicated funds payable

Columbarium maintenance	\$37,730
Memorials	\$48
Columbarium engraving liability	\$4,128
In/out various funds	\$135
Men's retreat	\$3,242
Music	\$1,890
Pastor's discretionary fund	\$371
Vacation Bible school	\$1,707
Women's retreat	\$769
Youth servant event	\$11,802
Rachel Circle	\$0
Preschool pass-through	\$1,799
Altar Guild	\$1,039
Adult/family events	\$20
Special Outreach	\$0
World Hunger	\$250
ELCA/SWR/LDR	\$500
Helpline House	<u>\$0</u>

#### Total dedicated funds payable

**\$65,430**

### TOTAL LIABILITIES

**\$298,272**

### EQUITY

**\$5,479,927**

### TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES

**\$5,778,198**

\* Note: As of September 30, 2023

\*\* Note: Church Mutual insured value