

Bethelite

A publication of Bethel Lutheran Church distributed twice monthly.



bethelmadison.org/bethelite

Transparency and Truth Leads to Trust When the Facts are Friendly

Bethel is at a unique point in its history. We are building a beautiful and magnificent legacy not only for our own families and friends, but for the city of Madison. Situated at the geological, political, and sociological epicenter for the greater Madison metro area, Bethel is poised to influence the community for decades to come. As we gather new resources, learn new skills, and adopt a new vision, the challenges before us will fall Goliath-like at our side. But before we set out to slay any giants, we have a few more steps to take. The first step for us to attend to this year is of building trust. To head into the unknown future and do what many consider impossible these days – that is, grow a downtown urban church – we need to learn to trust each other. Trust is hard to come by these days. Who do you know who to believe? My father always said that trust is something that we earn, and re-earn, over and over again.

To foster ever greater trust within Bethel, we are going to attain a level of transparency and truth telling that you don't often see in churches. Beginning this year at Bethel, we are going to pull back the curtain and show as much of our financial picture as we possibly can. There are no secrets to be held. In advance of the

Bethel Annual Meeting, the church council has made two powerful gestures: 1) Re-formatted the annual budget, and 2) scheduled open forums for full disclosure of budget numbers.



The congregation as a whole is the highest level of decision-making in the church. The congregation delegates the leadership and care of the affairs, business, and ministries of the congregation to the church council. As such, the church council is the soul fiduciary in the congregation. It is the council's legal, spiritual, and constitutional role to manage all church affairs wisely and openly. Council then appoints a sub-committee, the Finance Resource Team lead by the treasurer, to conduct financial business. To maintain the highest levels of transparency, Bethel's 2020 budget will show every cent that comes into Bethel Lutheran Church and every cent that goes out. It portrays the whole picture in wonderful clarifying detail.

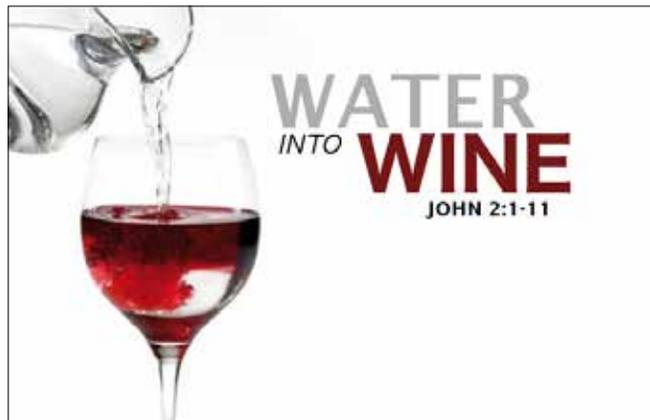
This year's budget will reveal where all the money comes from and where it goes. And the one thing you should be especially aware of is that it is good news. The facts are friendly. The church council wants all the members to know the story that the budget tells. It is the story of great generosity from people giving annually to the offering plate, of great legacy generosity from Foundation grants, and of remarkable dedication of hundreds of people working to extend Bethel's reach further into the community. This year's budget isn't a bunch of numbers adding up to a bottom line. It is the story of the transformation of people's lives and of a Madison community blessed beyond measure.

You can hear this story at the Annual Meeting on Jan 26 at 12:30pm. Or, you can join one of the Bethel Budget Breakouts scheduled that will walk you through the story and help you see its beauty. The first of these Budget Breakouts is Sunday, Jan 19, at 10:15am. The second is on Wed, Jan 22, at 6:30pm. I hope to see you there. I feel very confident that hearing and seeing the facts for yourself will earn your trust. 🌈

–Mike Brown, Lead Pastor

Wine Tasting Party:

Tasting God's Grace from an Uncorked Bottle



"Feasts are made for laughter; wine gladdens life." – Ecclesiastes 10:19

Wine plays a beautiful and central part in the story of the Bible and in the life of Jesus. More than simply a beverage, it is a symbol and a metaphor that points to the joy and abundance of a life lived in union with God. Jesus even refers to himself as the "true vine" from which the fruit of the vine (wine) comes forth. He is the source for true joy, merriment, and abundance. While the scriptures shun debauchery and drunkenness, they do invite a healthy consumption and appreciation of wine as a good gift from God. This is a gift Jesus shares with as well as we can read of his turning water into wine. On Feb 12 from 7-8:30pm, Bethel will have a wine tasting party in Borgwardt Hall to develop a holy appreciation for this Godly gift. There is no charge for the event. 🌈

**WHAT'S
HAPPENING**

Do you want to know what is happening at Bethel? A listing (with description) of all the events at Bethel is available here: www.bethel-madison.org/events. Bookmark this page to stay up-to-date with happenings at Bethel! 🌈

Epiphany Bible Study:

Leaving for Your Own Country by Another Way

Jan 19, 26, Feb 2 & 9 from 10:15-11:15am
led by Pam Shellberg



Epiphany, a "usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of

something," is the name given to the liturgical season sitting between the seasons of Christmas and Lent. The lectionary readings for the season of Epiphany are texts chosen by the church to help us discover – after having celebrated the birth of the Messiah – the essential nature and meaning of that birth, and to open the eyes of our hearts to where the Christ-spirit is being manifested around us today.

Our four-week study will be based on the biblical texts from the common lectionary given for the season: gospel texts from Matthew, texts from 1 Corinthians 1-3, several texts from Isaiah, and an assortment of psalms. We will explore the nature of epiphanies using Paul's ideas about wisdom and folly as a lens for fresh readings of the gospel texts and fresh visions for our lives – individually and as a community.

"Leaving for your own country by another way," recalls a verse from the story in Matthew's gospel of the magi who followed a star to Bethlehem in order to pay homage to a new king. The hope for our time together is that we will experience some epiphanies about where and what "home" is for each of us, and also some new insights about the many and various routes that are open to us – routes that will most certainly take us where we most long to go and most want to be, even if no longer by ways most familiar and recognizable to us. 🌈

–Pam Shellberg
Director of Lifelong Faith Formation

Synod-wide Town-hall Forums

The South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (our synod will elect a new bishop on June 20, 2020. Faithful conversations are taking place as we prayerfully prepare to elect this new bishop and all members of ELCA congregations in our synod are invited to participate in this election process by attending town-hall forums.

Conversations (regarding the particular needs/concerns of our synod as well as the necessary ministry/administrative gifts needed to address these concerns) will be held each of the next five Sundays (beginning Jan 12) at various locations through-out our synod. For details on times/locations, please go to: <https://scsw-elca.org/2020bishopelection>.

Talk with Pastor Margo with your questions or if you prefer a hard-copy of the election process details. 🌈

–Pastor Margo R. Martens

Graceful Engagement: 5 Principles of Reconciling in Christ



Bethel continues growing into the wide welcome of Jesus by adopting the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) resource to develop a deeper hospitality. Members who have volunteered to serve on the RIC steering team will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee to serve for one year. These quality people will guide our experience. The Steering Team's first priority in helping Bethel build a deeper and wider welcome is graceful engagement. This means that in everything we do at Bethel to widen our welcome, we will be guided by five principles.

These principles are 1) We will fill our conversations with compassion, love, and respect; 2) We will value people and their beliefs especially when they differ from ours; 3) We will listen and learn more than we will speak; 4) We will meet people "where they are" and not where we want them to be; and, 5) We will do this together. On the flip side, to be gracefully engaged means that we will call each other away from debating, arguing, fighting, squabbling, or condemning people with whom we might disagree. These 5 principles are skills that Bethel will embrace and use to build a church that is truly and deeply accepting of all people no matter their sexual orientation, gender, color, income, ability, age, shape, size, health, or political affiliation.

At Bethel, we are a family of God developing a new kind of community bound together by the life and death of Jesus Christ to be a shining light to Madison, the region, and to the world. 🌈

–Mike Brown, Lead Pastor

New Member Spotlight Ashley Becker



After growing up on a farm and attending college in eastern Iowa, I came to Madison a little over a year ago to pursue an Environment and Resources Master's degree. My academic interests focus on agricultural practices that benefit both people and the environment,

but I enjoy reading books and satisfying my sweet tooth outside of school. I was baptized and confirmed at First Lutheran Church in Maquoketa, IA, and I am happy to have found such a welcoming community at a Lutheran church here. 🌈

Rockstar Lutheran Pastor, Bestselling Author, Tattooed Mother:

Nadia Bolz-Weber to Speak at Bethel

On Thursday, March 12, at 7pm, Bethel will host the internationally acclaimed speaker, theologian, and author. Nadia Bolz-Weber grew up in a fundamentalist family, became a stand-up comedian, became addicted to drugs and alcohol, and wound-up an ELCA Lutheran pastor. As a pastor, she



started a new congregation in Denver, CO for people often considered the losers of society: alcoholics, drug addicts, homeless, drag queens, and other outcasts. The church's story is powerful. Her story is powerful. She is funny yet profound, spiritual yet crude, and wears a clergy collar yet covered in tattoos. A woman of contrasts, Nadia's message of the unrelenting love of God is unmistakable. Her visit to Madison is a gift Bethel is providing for members and the city. It is not something you will want to miss. Her topic for the evening will be from her latest best-selling book on SEX. Seating will be limited to the first 1,000. Free tickets can be registered for here: www.bethel-madison.org/nadia

Bethel Sets Its Sights for 2020:

Annual Meeting to Take Place Jan 26

12:30pm in the Sanctuary. 🌈

Numbers Tell A Story:

Bethel 2020 Budget Breakouts

- Jan 19 at 10:15am
Fireside Room
- Jan 22 at 6:30pm
Fireside Room

Everything about Bethel says something about who we are and where we believe God is leading us. That's true of our worship, our Sunday School, our Youth Programs, our building, ... everything. It all tells a story. Even the numbers in a spreadsheet tell a story – like a budget.

Join us at Bethel for the Bethel 2020 Budget Breakout sessions and hear the story of what God is up to at Bethel. It's exciting stuff! Yes! The budget is an exciting story. Come and hear for yourself. 🌈

Learn to Laugh Again

February 16-March 8



Sometimes people have the wrong view of God. They think they should be somber, serious, or down. Laughter is discouraged. Dancing is forbidden. But, God would not agree. Because, if the fact be known, God loves a party! God brings laughter where there were tears and a smile where there was sorrow. Join us and find the divine joy in the life of Jesus follower. In the sermon series, Learn to Laugh Again, Pastor Mike takes us on an exploration of the story of the wedding at Cana when Jesus brought life back to the party and how God's joy enters into our lives. 🌈

Youth Quake

I am beyond excited to welcome back the youth to Youth Quake for our new year together. We had an enthusiastic and spirit-filled start to our time together beginning last September, and this momentum is gaining speed into this new year!

In previous Bethelite articles, I've touched on the amazing capacity for relationships and a spiritual community to be a space of healing. As we learn to trust each other and rely on this community to be seen and loved, some challenging emotions have come up for us. We continue to see how God tells God's story through our lives, and this brings us closer to God and to each other. As much as these challenging emotions have brought us to know and trust each other, we also are sure to give ourselves the freedom to lighten up and play. As much as we dive into the challenging spiritual work of self-reflection, asking hard questions that may not lead us to any definitive answers, and discerning God in the chaos and struggle of our everyday lives, our spirits also yearn for play. In fact, play can be a spiritual practice, as we witness ourselves come alive with eagerness to connect. When we play - when we enjoy the fullness of life, and when we don't take ourselves too seriously, we let loose and experience the joy of God's gift of ourselves and having friends to enjoy it with. Like prayer, laughter and play can be healing to the body, mind and soul. Laughter and play are holy things, allowing our spirit to breathe and re-create.

On Jan 12, we excitedly welcomed back the youth for Youth Quake and had a special surprise for them! If you've had the chance to stop through the Youth Quake Room off of Borgwardt Hall, you've seen how beautiful our worship space is! As of the first of this year, we have begun to prepare the Game Room to be just as inviting. My hope is that stopping through, you can get the sense that something truly meaningful is happening there. As we play and are in fellowship with one another, we bless each other with the gift of experiencing the joy and freedom of living into God's love and gift of ourselves and each other.

Here's to an exciting year ahead of laughing and sharing joy together at God's amazing capacity to reveal Godself through play! 🌈

—Rachel Brown, Director of Youth Ministries

CARING FOR CREATION:

Preserving Special Places in Wisconsin

Protecting the outdoors from human degradation

February 23 | 10:15am | Borgwardt Hall

“Preserving Special Places in Wisconsin” is a growing challenge as human activities degrade our natural environment and landscape. Mary Jean Huston, the longtime Director of the Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin, will help us understand the role of public and private support in protecting the outdoors from human degradation. She will explain how conservation-funding programs – especially the State of Wisconsin-sponsored Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – protect such places. In particular she will describe the history of increasing and decreasing support of that program, its current status, and how it and other Wisconsin efforts compare with and also support similar efforts in other places. The important role of land trusts will also be highlighted.



Mary Jean Huston, State Director, Emerita, The Nature Conservancy's Wisconsin chapter has been employed by the Nature Conservancy in increasingly responsible positions across several states and the Midwest Regional Office until her retirement in November 2019.

As Wisconsin Nature Conservancy Director, Huston was responsible for the overall direction and management of the program. Included among her most significant accomplishments in that role are completing the 64,000-acre Wild Rivers Legacy Forest working forest easement; leading a conservation campaign that raised \$31.7 million in four years; maintaining a strong statewide Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program (public funding for land protection); bringing federal funds to Wisconsin for conservation priorities; and launching the North America Regional Initiative of the global Alliance for Water Stewardship.

This is one of five forums C4C will offer this year. The full schedule is available in the current C4C/C4SJ brochure, on the info board outside of the sanctuary and online at www.bethel-madison.org/caring-creation. 🌈

*—Wilda Nilsestuen
Caring for Creation Team Member*

Bethel's Homeless Ministry would appreciate donations of men's belts, duffle bags, suitcases and cloth shopping bags. Please bring items to the Pentecost Room on Tuesdays and Thursdays, to meet our guests see what we're all about. Or leave donated items, clearly marked "homeless ministry" at the reception desk. Thank you for making our ministry such a success!

LWR Quilt & Kit Tracking Update - Recent tracking information shows that Iraq received Personal Care Kits and Djibouti received donations of School Kits in November. Quilts made by the Blanket Workshop were sent to Ukraine in December. Your generous donations of quilts and kits continues to make a positive impact to those in need around the world. Thank you! -Patty Saxe

Men's Current Christian Concerns

(7-8am; Community Room)

Jan 16 – Medical Treatment: Who Pays?

Jan 23 – Higher Tide | **Jan 30** – Solar Energy

Social Justice Book Discussion (Jan 19; 10:15am) - Will meet to discuss the last 6 chapters of Robin DiAngelo's book, *White Fragility*.

Christian Men's Fellowship (Jan 21; 10:30am; Borgwardt Hall) Overview of Tinnitus & Hyperacusis; When the auditory brain is missing sound such as in complete silence or with reduced hearing thresholds, it can create a phantom auditory perception, or in other words, tinnitus. Fifty million Americans experience tinnitus, with 20% seeking additional help from a medical professional or audiologist. In addition, 30 million Americans experience hyperacusis. The impacts of debilitating tinnitus and hyperacusis can include problems with attention, stress, anxiety, sleeping, and hearing. By understanding the mechanisms of neurophysiological tinnitus & hyperacusis and using personalized management strategies, one can habituate to the reactions of tinnitus and hyperacusis. Dr. Jon Douglas is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Waisman Center at UW and is a consultant at Central Wisconsin Center, with more than 13 years of experience in the field of audiology. Brianna Ralston is a 3rd-year doctoral student at UW-Madison. She has had a mixture

of clinical experience across the lifespan including specialties such as autism spectrum disorder, pediatrics, complex-care systems, tinnitus, and cochlear implants.

Blanket Workshop (Jan 23) - Anyone is welcome to drop in between the hours of 9am-2pm to help tie pre-assembled quilts for Lutheran World Relief. No sewing skills are required! If you can tie a knot you are qualified! We meet in Borgwardt Hall. Join us for this wonderful time of fellowship and mission work as we create quilts that benefit those in need around the world.

Men's Book Study (Jan 24) - On Fri, Jan 24, the Bethel Men's Book Study will begin a new book, *Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story* by Wilfred M. McClay. This is the story of flawed individuals creating and building a great country. Come join us every Friday at 7am in Room 120 (sanctuary level) for lively conversation and great free coffee. And, by the way, this isn't your usual book group.

Breakfast with the Birds (Jan 25, Feb 8, 22, March 7, 21, and May 9; 9-11am; Bethel Horizons Nature Center) With this year's early snows, we've already identified 23 species visiting our feeding station. Join naturalist Eric Volden for an entertaining morning of bird watching and bird lore at Bethel Horizons' Nature Center. A hearty break-fast will be served with each session as Eric identifies birds coming to the feeders and relates bird feeding information and stories. Bring binoculars if you have them, and bird feeding stories to share. Cost for the breakfast and program is \$10/adult and \$7/child. Call 608.574.1992 for more info.

Feed and Read (Jan 27; Noon) - In *We Hope For Better Things* author Erin Bartels takes us on a journey through time - from the Underground Railroad during the Civil War, to the streets of 1960s Detroit to present day Detroit. The characters explore secrets, prejudices and courage in their lives. Join us on Monday, Jan 27 at noon to discuss this thought-provoking book. Bring a dish to pass or a sack lunch. Everyone is welcome.

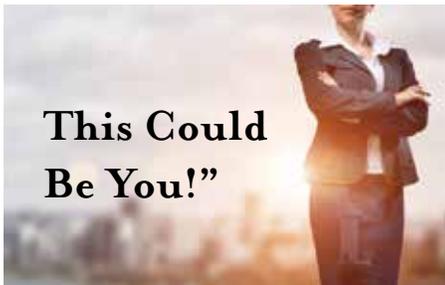
Bethel Jr! (Feb 2; 9am; Borgwardt Hall) - Bethel Jr! is the place where kids bring their family and friends to worship and learn about God's love. We will laugh, sing, breathe, play, and pray as we grow in our faith together. Following the service, children will go to Sunday School with their classroom leaders and adults are invited to stay for fellowship and Family Conversation from 10:15-11am in Borgwardt Hall. ALL are welcome!



“Drop in the Barrel”
for the Bethel Food Pantry
January: Dish Soap

We Want You!

Searching for Candidates



**This Could
Be You!"**

As Bethel says farewell and Godspeed to Karl Grimm, our beloved accountant, we begin the search for a new

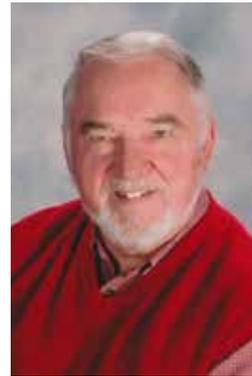
individual. Instead of filling the single accounting staff position, Bethel is creating hybrid position that will have a dual focus on accounting and operational management. This new position will be an executive leadership role as Director of Administration and will report directly to Pastor Mike.

The position description is posted online at www.bethel-madison.org/employment. Please download, copy and paste, or forward the description to anyone you believe would be a good candidate for Bethel. All inquiries and resumes should be sent to Pastor Mike at pastormike@bethel-madison.org. 🌈

Farewell and Godspeed

Bethel Says Goodbye to Beloved Staff Jan 26

We can all give thanks to God for the time we have shared with two of Bethel's staff members: Pastor Jerry Tews and Karl Grimm.



Pastor Jerry joined Bethel in April of this year as part time interim support pastor. At a time when Bethel was still searching for a Lead Pastor, Pastor Jerry accepted the invitation to serve among us in a supportive role for members and staff. Since that time, he has done that and more.

Pastor Jerry served faithfully every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday throughout the day to attend to walk-in emergency requests and to help support Bethel's Homeless ministry. Pastor Jerry, having completed his interim work, looks forward to God's new adventure for him.



Karl Grimm joined Bethel two years ago as Bethel's accountant. Karl has distinguished himself with a powerful work ethic and gentle demeanor. Karl is leaving to pursue new opportunities.

We will miss them both dearly. Both of these men will conclude their time of service at Bethel at the end of the month. Please join the Pastor Jerry and the church on Jan 26 at 10am for a celebratory send-off. Karl's send-off will be among staff the week prior. Gratitude and affirmations may be sent to each one at their Bethel emails. jerrytews@bethel-madison.org & karl@bethel-madison.org 🌈

—Mike Brown, Lead Pastor

FUND FACT \$

UPDATE: Near the end of Dec, (a few weeks ago) Congress passed a law that changes the IRA age requirements. It used to be that in the year one turned 70.5 yrs old, they were required to begin taking minimum distributions from their IRA. As of yesterday, Jan 1 the age is now 72 yrs old, that's when one must start taking distributions from their IRA. Only if one was 70.5 yrs by Dec 31, 2019, did that prior rule apply.

VIEW MORE OPPORTUNITIES: www.bethel-madison.org/events



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2 EPIPHANY

Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 18 at 5pm - Pentecost
Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 19 at 7:45 & 9am - Sanctuary
Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 19 at 11:15am - Sanctuary

3 EPIPHANY

Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 25 at 5pm - Pentecost
Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 26 at 7:45 & 9am - Sanctuary
Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 26 at 11:15am - Sanctuary

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

7-11a Pentecost Respite (Pentecost)
7:45a Worship Service (Sanctuary)
8:00a Coffee Fellowship (Emmaus)
9:00a Worship Service (Sanctuary)
9:30a Children's Ministry: Sunday School, Choir and Kids Fellowship
10:15a Weekly Bible Study (Rm 120)
Budget 2020 Forum (Fireside)
Epiphany Bible Study (GS Chapel)
Confirmation Movie & Discussion (Rm 200)
11:15a Worship Service (Sanctuary)
5:30p Parent Discussion Group (GS Chapel)
Youth Activities (Borgwardt Hall)
6:00p Confirmation & Senior High Youth Quake (Youth Quake Room)

MONDAY, JANUARY 20 - CLOSED

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21

8:30a Homeless Support Services (Pentecost)
9:00a Library Open (Library)
10:30a Christian Men's Fellowship (Borgwardt Hall)
11:45a Women's Coordinating Council (Fireside)
12:00p Food Pantry Open 12-3pm (T-F) (Lower Level)
BLCEF Investment Committee Mtg (Rm 200)
5:15p Rebuilding at Bethel (Library, Rm 120)
5:30p Women's Choir (Choir)
6:30p Creative Worship Singers (Choir)
Joint Council (Community)
7:30p Worship Team Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

6:00p Bell Choir (Rm 202)
6:30p Budget 2020 Forum (Fireside)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

7:00a Current Christian Concerns (Community)
8:00a Second Harvest Delivery
8:30a Homeless Support Services (Pentecost)
9:00a Blanket Workshop (Borgwardt Hall)
7:00p Bethel Choir (Choir)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

7:00a Men's Book Study (Rm 120)
8:30a XYZ Bridge Players (Emmaus)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

9:30a Food Pantry Open 9:30-11:30am (Lower Level)
5:00p Worship Service (Pentecost)
Bhutanese Worship in Nepali (GS Chapel)

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