

Bethelite

A publication of Bethel Lutheran Church distributed twice monthly.



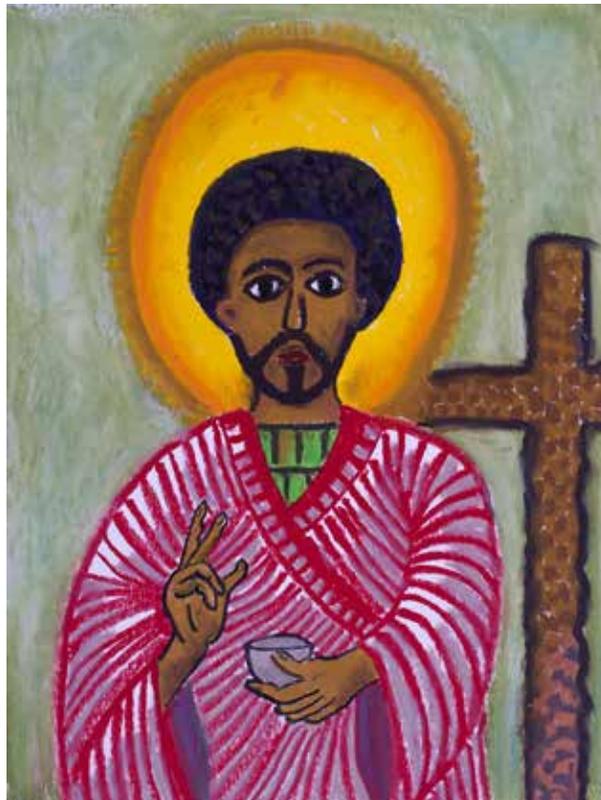
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OUT OF AFRICA

Martin Luther and the Ethiopian Church

This year marks the 503rd year anniversary of the launching of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. Celebrations will be held around the world to remember the history and tell the story. When telling these stories of the Reformation, the names that usually come up begin, of course, with Martin Luther. Luther is rightly considered the father of the Protestant Reformation. After Luther, comes John Calvin and then Ulrich Zwingli. Both Calvin and Zwingli were inspired and shaped by Luther's writings. But, who inspired and shaped Luther? Some would simply say "the Holy Spirit," or perhaps "St. Augustine," or the "Apostle Paul." These figures did indeed help shape Luther. But there was a contemporary to Luther who helped shape the Reformation in Europe and then around the world. That oft' overlooked influence was a monk in the Ethiopian church, Deacon Michael. It is a little-known fact of history that Luther was hugely inspired by one of the oldest group of Christians in the world, the African church in Ethiopia. Ethiopian Christianity traces its roots to the book of Acts (8:26-38) when Philip converted an Ethiopian court

official. According to Luther, the Ethiopian church served as an older, wiser, black sibling to white Christian kingdoms in Europe.



"Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship" –Acts 8:27

Located in Africa – out of reach from the Roman Catholic Church – the Ethiopian church developed

independent of Rome and the pope. This, according to Luther, made Ethiopian Christianity the "dream," a true forerunner to Protestantism.

It was an ancient church with direct ties to the apostles. This validated Luther's vision of a church outside the authority of the Roman Catholic papacy. Ethiopian Christians practiced their faith in ways unacceptable in Roman Catholicism. These practices included celebrating communion with both bread and wine, Scriptures in the language of the people, and married clergy. Ethiopian Christianity also lacked certain practices Protestants came to dismiss. That included the primacy of the Roman pope, indulgences, purgatory, and marriage as a sacrament.

Luther's fascination with the Ethiopian Church was solidified in 1534 when he had a face-to-face dialogue with an Ethiopian cleric, Michael the Deacon. From his dialogue with Michael the Deacon, Luther was thrilled to learn that what he had rediscovered in his reading of the Scriptures was already present in the Ethiopian Church. For Luther, the Church of

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Ethiopia was the historical proof that his reform of the Church in Europe had a clear historical and biblical basis.

The historical fact that the Protestant Reformation has roots in Ethiopian Christianity is a needed reminder for us today during a time of increased racism, cultural tensions, and social animosity. It is a fact of biology and a fact of Christ's kingdom that there is no such thing as "race." It is a human-made reality. By tracing our roots back in time we are encouraged with the news that it is part of our church DNA to work with, to learn from, and to find common cause with people who are of African descent. 🌍

*–Pastor Mike Brown
Lead Pastor*

Reformation Sunday Goes Big

Dr. Alex Gee To Preach at Bethel

October 25



Over the past three decades Dr. Alex Gee has served as an advisor to leaders from around the world. His sage wisdom and incredible insight into individuals and systems has gained him influence with leaders from civic, corporate, non-profit and academic sectors as well as entertainers, governmental leaders and dignitaries.

Dr. Gee is the Lead Pastor of Fountain of Life Covenant Church, a multiracial, multigenerational and multi-class congregation in Madison, WI. He is the most tenured Senior Pastor in the entire city. In 1992, he also pioneered The Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development, a non-profit organization that inspires, develops and mobilizes emerging African American leaders to become partners in

revitalizing and transforming our community. These two organizations work together to reveal grace and hope in every sector of the community. He is passionate about promoting inspiration, transformation and justice for disenfranchised African American people, for the benefit of the entire city. Bethel Lutheran Church was a key partner and financial supporter helping Dr. Gee launch the Nehemiah Center.

Most recently, Gee has nudged his local community to rethink racial disparities in Madison, WI, by launching an incredible citywide movement called Justified Anger, named after a stirring front page essay he wrote about his experiences growing up in Madison as a Black man. This movement has gained Gee national attention for this work. Gee assembled an impressive team of African American influencers from local businesses, The University of Wisconsin, community agencies and churches, to create a comprehensive framework called "The Our Madison Plan", designed to unify Madison's divided communities. Gee's recent efforts have created historic gatherings and has mobilized over 1,000 non-black allies into the community. Gee's non-profit was recently awarded a major grant from the UW-Madison School of Medicine & Public Health for continuing its work in addressing health disparities among African Americans in Wisconsin. Over the past five years, Gee's efforts have included educating, coaching and mobilizing white allies, as well as building capacity and networking opportunities for Madison's Black emerging leaders, in order to build social cohesion that will lead to the creation of sustainable solutions for addressing our problems together.

In recognition of his efforts, Dr. Gee has received numerous honors that range from The City of Madison's Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award in 1994, to being invited to offer an inspirational message at the White House for President H.W. Bush's staff. In 1995 the Madison Community Foundation honored him for his "Outstanding Contributions to the Community," and he has been saluted by the Wisconsin-State Journal as one of the "Ten Who Made a Difference." In 2009 Reverend Gee earned his Doctorate and his dissertation title was: Rediscovering Leadership Development Strategies for Fatherless African American Males. In 2015, he was named by Madison365 as one of the 28 most influential African-Americans in Wisconsin. He is a published author of two books, an adjunct faculty member, a podcast host, Spiritual Life Coach, and he is proud to be the husband, brother, father and son of UW-Madison graduates. 🌍

Fireside Chats

Pastor Mike has hosted Fireside Chats each Tuesday evenings to answer questions about the church, the Bible, etc. Beginning in October, Fireside Chats will branch out by inviting others into the Fireside Seat. There is so much going-on at and with Bethel that we want to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information and details possible. Starting in October, other staff, leaders, and ministry volunteers will take a turn responding to your questions especially as they relate to something that they are intimately familiar with. Tuesday Fireside Chats are live-streamed at 7pm on Facebook or viewed on YouTube any time after 8pm. If you have any questions you would like to ask, please send them to christal@bethel-madison.org.

Upcoming Fireside Chat Schedule

- Oct 27** - Pam Shellberg
- Nov 3** - Church Council (General)
- Nov 10** - Alice and Walter D (BEF)
- Nov 17** - Financial Resources Team
- Nov 24** - Cindy Terhune-Melrose (Children & Families)
- Dec 1** - Horizons
- Dec 8** - Amy (Music)
- Dec 15** - Pastor Mike (General)
- Dec 22** - John Swanson 🌈

Hephatha Lutheran 'Mission Partner Appreciation Day'

Sat, Nov 7 from 3-3:30pm



Hephatha Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, our mission partner church, requests us to join their 'Mission Partner Appreciation Day' via Zoom. You can join the Zoom gathering

by going to Hephatha's website at hephatha100.com. We hope to 'see' you there! 🌈

Friends & Family Campfire Picnics at Bethel Thursdays in October



Bethel will be hosting a Campfire Picnic from 5:30-7:30pm on Thursdays in October in the church parking lot. There will be a light meal, prayer, games, music and smores around a warm campfire.

The food is by 'Food Junkies' and will include: a soup and sandwich combo for \$10/person or \$25/family. Payment options are text to give (text BLC to 73256) or cash/check night of the event.

The event will follow all the COVID -19 guidelines to insure we are keeping ourselves and each other safe.

To sign-up please select the below link. To order food you must sign-up by Tuesday the week of the picnic you are attending.

Sign-up Here: www.bethel-madison.org/campfire

You will receive a follow-up email a day before the event.

If you are willing to donate your fire pit for the month of October to Bethel please contact John at jswanson@bethel-madison.org.

For questions please contact one of the Nurturing Committee members: Pastor John Swanson at jswanson@bethel-madison.org, Kathy Pielage at kmpielage@gmail.com or Kelly Knueve at kellyknueve@gmail.com. 🌈

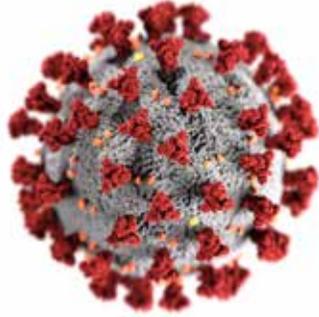
Caring for Creation

Covid-19: Dress Rehearsal for the Climate Change Crisis

Tues, Oct 27, 7:30pm; Zoom Webinar

Science writer Connie Mutel will draw parallels between the COVID-19 pandemic and the current and future effects of climate change, in terms of scientific understanding, public perceptions and governmental responses.

What can we learn from COVID-19 to help us prepare for the climate of the future? How can we communicate effectively and motivate constructive responses to both the nearer-term COVID-19 crisis and the emergent but longer-term climate change crisis?



Cornelia (Connie) Mutel, Author and Retired Science Writer, IIHR-Hydroscience & Engineering, University of Iowa

Before her retirement, Connie was a senior science writer and archivist in Iowa's Institute of Hydraulic Research. She has completed eight books, including *A Sugar Creek Chronicle: Understanding Climate Change from a Midwestern Woodland* (2016), many of which focus on Iowa's ecology. Connie and her professor husband are longtime residents of Iowa City, where they live on 18 acres of oak-hickory woodland. She writes about the natural world and the destruction of it, calling Iowa

"the most modified landscape in the world." Unlike many scientists, Connie enjoys writing, integrating essay style into science writing. As a "deeply spiritual person" she sees it as process, beauty, and deeply meditative. So many converging environmental problems are currently and simultaneously at work – like climate change, floods, pandemics. She writes and speaks to help others understand that we are at a turning point for our planet.

Login Link: <https://tinyurl.com/y2f4vz7r> 🌈

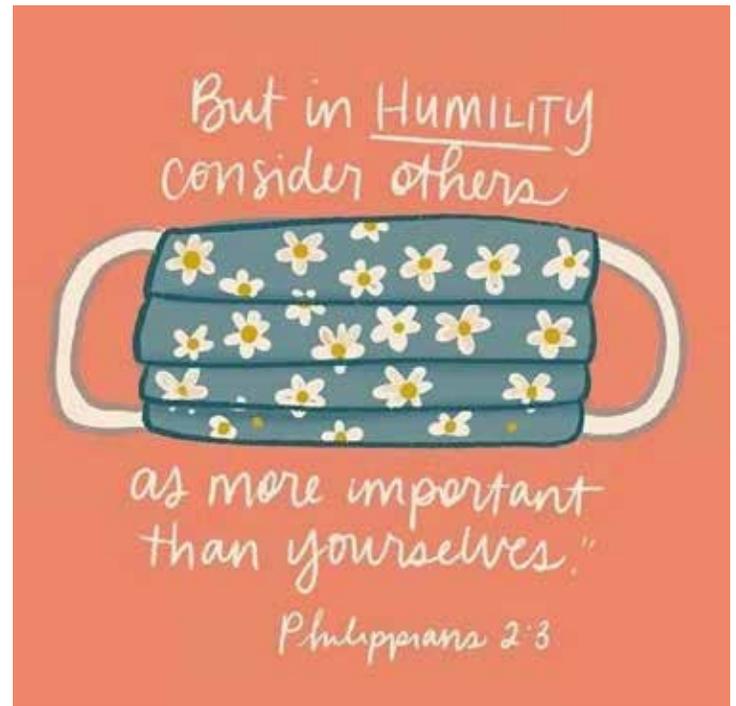
New Sermon Series: The Good Shepherd

Bethel's Fall Stewardship Invitation

Nov 8, 15, 22



During the month of November, Bethel will tune its ears and focus its sight on the one who guides, provides, and teaches us – The Good Shepherd. There are few portions of scripture as well-known or well-loved as Psalm 23. Like lambs eager for green pastures we will meditate, pray, and learn from the only One who is able to supply our deepest need. A stewardship packet will be mailed out in November containing encouragements, information, and a pledge card. The date for returning pledge cards is November 22. 🌈



Bethel A National Leader in Seminary Support

Helping Launch Over 100 Pastors

Bethel Lutheran Church is a national leader among congregations in the Evangelical Church in America. Having helped fund the educations of over 100 Lutheran pastors, Bethel is working on its second hundred. With close to 10,000 individual churches in the ELCA, few of those come close to Bethel's level of financial commitment in supporting the next generation of pastoral leaders. Bethel's support grew from the vision of two men in Bethel's storied past. In the late 1970's, Richard Shimon established a Bethel memorial fund to support seminarians. Then a decade later, 94-year-old Bethel leader Cephas Johnson died. But before he reached his heavenly destination he reached deep into his pockets and left a one-million-dollar gift to the church. Of that bequest to the Bethel Endowment Foundation, much of it goes to the support of seminarians.

Bethel's generosity reaches beyond its own members alone and is offered to all members of an ELCA church in Dane County who are on track for a Master of Divinity degree at an ELCA seminary.

Each year, Bethel sends notice to each Dane County congregation in the ELCA's South-Central Synod to publicize the available support. In the past 30 years, Bethel has helped shoulder the financial burden for

more than 100 men and women studying for the ministry. In fact, we have begun working on our second hundred pastors.

One Bethel member who was ordained in 2009, had this to say about this assistance: "My call to ministry was nurtured and encouraged during my years at Bethel. During seminary, the tuition grant allowed me to concentrate on my studies without the added pressure of figuring out how to pay for it. More importantly, though, is the fact that I graduated from seminary

without debt. As I was discerning calls, I did not have to take student loan payments into consideration. I continue to give thanks to the Bethel Endowment Foundation for this significant gift which affirmed and encouraged my call to ministry." This school year, Bethel is helping support five seminarians, all



enrolled at Wartburg Seminary (Pastor Mike's alma mater). This year alone, Bethel celebrates the ordination of two members who received significant financial support from Bethel.

Praise be to God for the generous and visionary leaders in the Bethel family tree. May we all be so inspired! 🌈



Dear Bethel,

Thank you very much for your financial support and prayers during my seminary studies. I was ordained at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Elgin, IL on Oct 11, 2020 by Rev. Yehiel Curry, Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. You can view the service here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=100XS3MJk94

Blessings,
José F. Rodríguez Páez

Bethel Confirms New Generation of Believers

Outdoor Service Inspires

On Sunday, Oct 11, under the canopy of an overcast sky and in the shelter of an outdoor tent on the Bethel parking lot, ten young adults shared statements of faith and declared intentions of serving Christ. These following individuals have joined the ranks of the confirmed at Bethel. 🌈

Melinda Angel Alba



McKenna Elizabeth Carroll



Sydney Isabelle Davidson



Mia Genae Heisler



Kaiden Lee Kraemer



Charlotte Katheryne Krez



Jacob Brian Lange



Kelsi Ann Lauritsen



Nicholas Leroy Walters



Noah Admiral Walters

Realm Corner

Giving and Pledging in Realm

To Give in Realm

1. Click on Giving in the column on the left side of the screen.
2. Click on +Give
3. Put in the amount..... choose the fun from the dropdown (click arrow for dropdown)
4. Choose give once or give multiple times (if you would like regular withdrawals click on multiple times)
5. Choose how often you would like the withdrawals
6. Choose start date (if you would like the money to come out on the 15th of every month you would need to click on the 15th, etc)
7. Click continue
8. Under payment method..... click on the dropdown arrow and choose "Enter a different payment method"
9. Put in the new account information
10. When finished, click "Give"

To Pledge in Realm

1. Click on Giving in the column on the left side of the screen.
2. Click on +Pledge
3. Put in the amount you would like to pledge
4. Choose the campaign you would like to give to
5. To be given choose from the dropdown list
6. Click "Save Pledge" or "
7. "Save and set up online gift" to set up the account you would like the gift to come from

For more information about what you can do in the Giving Section of your Realm account please watch the giving video here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx9gg19y> 🎥



Trunk-or-Treat Halloween Drive-In

Oct 24, 4-6pm



Dress-up for vehicle's trunk for Halloween, dress-up yourself in a Halloween costume, and come to Bethel's parking lot for a walking tour of all the Halloween spirit! Each family will park in the parking lot and see marked on the parking lot with chalk their own space for carving pumpkins. Bring supplies to decorate or carve a Jack-o-lantern, pumpkins provided! Pre-packaged candy will be provided, too! To participate, please sign-up here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4fjddy7>. Space will be limited to ensure social distancing. 🎃

Men's Current Christian Concern (Thursdays at 8:30am)

Men's Current Christian Concerns continues to meet each Thursday morning via a Zoom video conference. The meeting starts at 8:30am instead of 7am during this temporary rearrangement.

Oct 22 - Ushering in Live Worship at Bethel

Oct 29 - All Things Nuclear

If you have questions, contact Larry Larrabee at 608.249.9982.

The **Men's Friday Book Study** currently meets every Friday from 8-9am via Zoom. The group is discussing *Why Does The World Exist?* by Jim Holt. Contact Larry Larrabee at lar3car2@gmail.com or 608.249.9982 for the Meeting ID and Password.

TEXT TO GIVE - Text "BLC" to 73256 to give.

GIVE ONLINE - www.bethel-madison.org/giveonline

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



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Emergency Cell: 608.216.3600

REFORMATION

Dr. Alex Gee, Pastor of Fountain of Life Community Church,
and Director of the Nehemiah Center
Oct 25 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

22 PENTECOST

Pastor Mike Brown - Nov 1 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

- 7:30a Worship Service (live-stream Facebook & YouTube)
- 9:00a Worship Service (viewed on Facebook & YouTube)
- 10:00a Virtual Coffee Hour (Zoom)
- 11:00a Worship Service (live-stream on Facebook & YouTube)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 12:00p Food Pantry Open 1-3pm (MWF)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 7:00p Fireside Chats (Facebook)
- 7:30p Caring for Creation: Dress Rehearsal for the Climate Change Crisis
- 8:00a Fireside Chats (YouTube)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 6:30p Lord's Supper (live-stream Facebook)
- 8:00p Lord's Supper (YouTube)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

- 8:30a Men's Current Christian Concerns (Zoom)
- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 10:00a Contemplative Scripture Reading with Pam Shellberg (Zoom)
- 5:30p Campfire Picnics (Bethel Parking Lot)
- 8:30p Contemplative Scripture Reading with Pam Shellberg (Zoom)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

- 8:00a Men's Friday Book Study (Zoom)
- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)

PASTORAL STAFF

Pastor Mike Brown - Lead Pastor
pastormike@bethel-madison.org

Pastor John Swanson - Director of Congregational Life
jswanson@bethel-madison.org

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