

# Bethelite

A publication of Bethel Lutheran Church distributed twice monthly.



[bethelmadison.org/bethelite](http://bethelmadison.org/bethelite)

## ONE STEP AT A TIME:

### Walking Through Hard Times

Pastor Mike Brown

**A**s we continue forward through this pandemic, I have been asked several times recently “how do you think Bethel is doing?” My answer is almost always the same. The pandemic is awful. It is a pain. It is sad that so many people are getting sick. It is tragic that so many people are dying from the virus. It’s almost unbearable that we are not able to offer in-person worship or ministries. Many members are worn out from the situation. In spite of all that is terrible about our current situation, I must say that Bethel is doing very very well. Think of it like this.

Winter comes and the ground freezes. You walk outside and see it in a frigid state, seemingly lifeless. Not much movement. Not much activity. The cold brings our visible world to an appearance of lifelessness. But, in fact, that is not true, for beneath the frost line the soil is teeming with life and activity. Roots continue to grow and draw nourishment. Critters and bugs push their way around in the

darkness. Microbes continue their life unaffected, consuming organic material, reproducing at fantastic rates, and constantly enriching the soil.



Looking from the outside at Bethel that has not had in-person worship or indoor programs for close to 9 months, you might conclude that things must be pretty dire, lifeless, and devoid of activity. But nothing could be further from the truth. Even in the pandemic, Bethel is teeming with life and vitality. We are setting down deeper and deeper roots. New roots are stretching out for new

opportunities. Staff and volunteers are pushing and straining to generate creative directions that are going to set Bethel up for an extended period of growth and vitality. One example for dramatic growth is the area of online and digital ministry. Churches that were started after 1994 are generally much better at reaching the community with online and digital efforts. That is because those churches were “born” with the internet and came of age during the rise of the internet. They are natives as churches to the digital world. Other churches, like Bethel, who have long and wonderful historical roots did not come of age with the internet. Learning the internet was more a matter of convenience. For churches that started after 1994, mastering the internet was a necessity. If they didn’t, they didn’t get off the ground. One of the great opportunities the pandemic has provided Bethel is the

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opportunity to get caught up with our use and understanding of the internet, and social media, as powerful tools for church growth. Now, everything we do is online. And we are learning fast. We are even working with a consultant to make sure that we get the most from this opportunity. We're learning what the best, the brightest, and the fastest growing churches in America are doing online that we could do to build a more dynamic Bethel. As a result, new roots are sinking deep. That is just one of half a dozen major benefits that we are realizing during this period of great stress and suffering but also great opportunity.

I know it is a hard time for everyone. It can even feel unbearable. But we are going to make it through, together. We're going to take it one day at a time, together. God is doing great things in ways that we can't always see in the moment. And we will do this, together, one step at a time. 🌈

## Sermon Series: Advent - Comfort My People

Now-Dec 20



The season of Advent, Now- Dec 20, leads into the beautiful and grand, hopeful and celebratory season of Christmas. Unlike Christmas, Advent's beauty and hopefulness come from something more subdued than the grandness and celebratoriness of Christmas. The beauty and hope of Advent is found in the moments of calm, peace, prayer, preparation, quiet, reflection, and wonder that come our way thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit. Advent asks us to pause, and this year, unlike past years, we may have an increased opportunity to do just that. During Advent, we will be focusing on the theme, "Comfort My People" through our worship led by Pastor John Swanson, devotions, Sunday School work and much more. Please take the time to slow down with us at Bethel this Advent. 🌈

A graphic with a black background and colorful bokeh lights in shades of blue, orange, and yellow. The word "Christmas" is written in a large, white, cursive font across the center. Below it, "AT BETHEL" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a blue horizontal bar containing three columns of text: "CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY 3PM", "CHRISTMAS EVE CONTEMPORARY 5PM", and "CHRISTMAS EVE TRADITIONAL 7PM". Below the blue bar, the text "ONLINE AT WWW.BETHEL-MADISON.ORG/CHRISTMAS" is written in a white, sans-serif font.



# Sharing the Spirit of Christmas with a Neighbor



Sharing the hope and joy of the Advent and Christmas season is one of the hallmarks of caring communities. Members of our Bethel community always rise to such an opportunity with openness and

generosity, choosing gifts for “a neighbor” who they do not know and may never meet. Many households and families have made this a practice of giving over many years, known as the “Giving Hope for the Holidays” program.

Moving forward, let’s call it “Share the Spirit of Christmas With a Neighbor!”

Advent/Christmas 2020, our neighbors are once again clients of programs at MARC-South, a facility that provides day services and personal care to adults with developmental disabilities and the additional challenges of dementia.

This year, due to COVID-19, the gift tags will be chosen via SignUp Genius at [www.bethel-madison.org/neighbors](http://www.bethel-madison.org/neighbors).

It’s different and new, but manageable, we promise! Here are the steps:

1. Go to [www.bethel-madison.org/neighbors](http://www.bethel-madison.org/neighbors).
2. Click on the SignUp Genius Link
3. Choose a neighbor and follow the directions on the page to select one of the gift suggestions presented by the caring staff at MARC.
4. Purchase or order the gift EARLY and arrange delivery to Bethel by Monday, Dec 14.
5. Important instructions if ordering your gift online:
  - a. Specify that it is a gift and include GIFT WRAP
  - b. Have it labeled with the neighbor’s name @ MARC-SOUTH

The gift can be shipped directly to Bethel at the following address:

Bethel Lutheran Church  
Attn: Sharing Gifts  
312 Wisconsin Ave.  
Madison WI 53703-2108



6. Important instructions if the gift is from a local source OR if you receive delivery to your home:
  - a. Wrap the gift and label it with the neighbor’s name.
  - b. Deliver or ship it to Bethel (address above) by Monday, Dec 14. 🌈

## Bethel Blue Christmas Service Monday, Dec 21 at 6pm Online



Many people get “the blues” at some point during the year. Often times these are brought on by the loss of a loved one or other painful experience. When we find ourselves caught in “the blues” it can be difficult, if not

impossible, to participate in the usual Christmas fanfare with its over-the-top music, cheery decorations, and expressions of “Merry Christmas!” Many might wonder “what’s so merry about it, when my heart is heavy?”

Each year, Bethel offers a quiet, contemplative Christmas worship service for those with a heavy heart. Sharing carols for listening or sing-along, comforting readings from scripture, prayer, silent and spoken, and lighting candles of hope, Bethel’s Blue Christmas provides a safe space for mourners to come together at Christmas time.

Call Pastor Mike or Amy Hartsough for more information at 608.257.3577. 🌈

# A Very Bethel Christmas

Christmas CD Gift for You



Since late summer and with the leadership of Amy Hartsough, Bethel musicians have been secretly and quietly preparing a special gift for you. Since we are unable to enjoy the dynamic music that fills the Bethel sanctuary every

Christmas Eve together in person, Bethel is bringing the music to you! Recording in the sanctuary and in the studio, the following musicians bring you A Very Bethel Christmas: Katie Gerlach, Nathan Gerlach, Patrick Kenney, Amy Hartsough, Linda Warren, Gary Lewis, Alex LeMay, Maddie Melrose, Cindy Terhune Melrose, Benjamin Skroch, Donn Gasner, Doug Terhune, Ian Melrose, Barry Dobbs, Chelsea Lauing, the Bethel Choir, and the Bethel Women's Choir.

This CD, available to you the second week of December, is free of charge. To receive your copy, simply email or call Bethel to request one be mailed to you, come by the church office and pick one up, or simply download it from the Bethel website. Special thanks go to the Bethel Endowment Foundation for providing the funds for this project. 🌈



# Keep You Safe

Bethel's Response to COVID



Wisconsin is in the midst of a dramatic increase in COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths. The Madison Dane County Health Department responded on Nov 16 with a new public health order. This order says that there should be no indoor gatherings of people from different households, and outdoor gatherings are limited to 10 people or less. The COVID task force met to review the current situation in Dane County and recommend adjustments to Bethel's COVID plan.

The task force used data from public reporting of Dane County numbers to determine the risk of infection to Bethel members when we gather. If a group of six people gather in Dane County, the probability that one of those six is infectious is 25%. This helps us to understand why Dane County has advised that we not gather, even in small groups, at this time. In order to protect our members from infection, support our community's health, protect our health care workers, and preserve our local healthcare resources, the Joint Council has approved the following changes to the Bethel Safely Forward Plan:

1. Cancel all meetings scheduled at Bethel. This includes: book groups, circles, blanket workshop, Bethel Bible Series and any other groups who were previously scheduled to meet in groups of 10 or less. Meetings will not be scheduled for future dates until Dane County lifts the ban on indoor gatherings.
2. Weddings, baptisms and funerals may continue with a maximum of 10 people. Only the religious service is allowed, with no receptions, meetings or meals before or after.

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3. Homeless Ministry can continue outdoor distribution of mail, clothing, food and supplies according to their current policy under the "human services" exception to the order. They will continue to limit volunteers to only essential personnel and keep volunteers working in separate locations as much as possible.
4. Food Pantry can continue operations according to their current policy under the "human services" exception to the order. They will continue to limit the number of volunteers working in close proximity in the food pantry as much as possible.

Bethel will continue to offer Online Worship, Lord's Supper, Fireside Chats, Devotions, and Bible Study, in addition to Zoom Kids Ministry, Zoom Confirmation and Zoom Youth Group. We are grateful to the pastors, staff and volunteers who make this robust online faith community possible. The COVID Task Force will continue to meet as conditions change and will keep the congregation apprised of our recommendations.

Bethel COVID-19 Task Force: Heather Moen (facilitator), Kim Kindschi (Joint Council President), Pastor Mike Brown, Judy Armelin, Craig Gjerde, Eric Kneuve, Greg Moses, Steve Lawrence, Kathy Pielage, Bev Thom, Mike Thom, Denis Vogel, Laura Vogel. 🌈

## Familiar Interim Pastor Rejoins Bethel



As Pastor John moves toward a new adventure in ministry with our love and affection, another beloved figure moves back in to serve on an interim part-time basis. Pastor Roger Black, who recently served Bethel in an interim capacity during the search for a new Lead Pastor, will be rejoining the team on January 2,

2021 to provide support. Pastor Black will help with visitation, hospital calls, requests for emergency help, and other responsibilities on an as-needed basis. He will stay with us up until the time Bethel calls a new full time Pastor of Outreach. Let us give thanks that God has provided us an interim who already knows Bethel and many of the people. 🌈

## Beloved Pastor for 26 Years: Pastor John Announces New Call



At its regular monthly meeting on November 17, Pastor John informed the Bethel Joint Church Council that he has accepted a position as interim pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Watertown, WI. This appointment culminates close to a year of special training for interim ministry by Pastor John and certification at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN.

Through his 26 years at Bethel, Pastor John has been a steady and Christ-like companion in Bethel's journey. His time among us has been marked with hundreds of baptisms, funerals, confirmations, hospital visits, sermons, classes, prayers, and much laughter, some tears, and great joy. He will be missed. It is rare for congregations to have the services of such a long-term associate pastor. That makes Pastor John's tenure at Bethel a remarkable gift to celebrate. Now, we also celebrate with him the gift of his new call and the good fortune of Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Pastor John's effective last day will be December 14. His last sermon will be on December 13. During services that day, there will be a laying on of hands blessing of Godspeed for Pastor John. These services will be live-streamed on Bethel's Facebook and YouTube pages. Members and friends of Bethel are invited to send in gifts, cards, and letters to present to Pastor John on his last Sunday, December 13. Financial gifts for John should be by check and made out to John Swanson. In the memo line and on the outer envelope, please write "ingathering". Gift cards are also welcome. All checks, gift cards, greeting cards, notes, and letters will be handed to John as part of Bethel's expression of gratitude for 26 years of service.

Please mail to: Bethel Lutheran Church, 312 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 53703 🌈



## Realm Corner

### Where can I find the Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Reports?

Before COVID, if you wanted to read the minutes of the Council meeting you would have been able to find them hanging on a bulletin board in the hallway outside of Borgwardt Hall at Bethel. These documents were hung up on the bulletin board once they were approved at the next Council meeting. For example, the September minutes would have been hung up after being approved at the October council meeting.

Since members are not able to access the building like they were before COVID, where can you find the minutes and financial reports? I'm glad you asked.

Realm is our church database with all of our member information however, it is much more. If you are a member of Bethel you are in a group in Realm called "Bethel Member Directory". This group gives you access to the contact information of other members, like the old "Directory Book", but it is also where you can find the Church Council Minutes and Financial Report.

#### How do you access them?

1. Sign into Realm using your account email and your password.
2. In the left-hand column, under the Bethel logo... Click on "Community".
3. Then click on "Groups".
4. Click on "Bethel Member Directory".
5. In the horizontal bar under Bethel Member Directory.... Click on "Files".
6. Scroll down and you will be able to see all of the 2019 and 2020 Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Reports.
7. Click on the report you would like to look at and it will open a new tab with the document in the bottom left corner of your computer.
8. Click on the tab and the document will open.

The documents are saved as PDF files, so you will need Acrobat Reader to read the documents.

If you would like to SEE how to open the Council Minutes and Financial Report in Realm please watch this video. <https://tinyurl.com/y55ck5sd>

If you have any questions, please contact Judy Armelin at [judy@bethel-madison.org](mailto:judy@bethel-madison.org). 🌈



## Bethel Seeks Director of Finance



Are you an up-and-comer with high energy and a passion for non-profits? If so, this opportunity is for you! Bethel Lutheran Church is looking for a Director of Finance to join our team. This position will be responsible for the accounting and financial reporting for Bethel Lutheran Church. Responsibilities include preparing and analyzing financial reports, summarizing financial data and trends, aiding in the budgeting process, coordinating financial audits, and other duties while providing accounting support and strategic communication for Bethel's entities.

We are looking for someone with non-profit accounting and finance experience including proven project management experience. Bachelor's degree in Accounting or Finance and CPA required.

For further consideration, please reach out to Hillary Schreiner: [Hillary.schreiner@bakertilly.com](mailto:Hillary.schreiner@bakertilly.com) or 608.240.2395. 🌈

# Pastor Mike, On the Job and Ready

As Bethel moves through this time of pandemic and pastoral change, rest assured that no one is going to get overlooked or fall “through the cracks.” Each and every person is treasured and valuable at Bethel, from the youngest to the oldest. Pastor Mike will be on-call and at-the-ready for visitation, comfort, and encouragement. Pastor Mike is working with Judy Armelin, the Nurturing Team, and the Care Visitors to make certain that people have the emotional and spiritual support they need. Please don't hesitate to call Pastor Mike at the Bethel office 608.257.3577 or on his cell 419.345.2836. We are here for you. 🌈

## Pastoral Call Committee Report

Bethel's Call Committee recently received profiles for three candidates in the search for a Pastor of Outreach. These profiles are a first step in getting acquainted with candidates as the committee discerns whom to recommend to the Bethel Joint Church Council. Profiles are 12-16 pages long and are filled with information on a pastor. Once those profiles are thoroughly read by the committee, they may then invite none, some, or all for an interview. The three candidates the committee received were all extended a first interview. Please keep the Call Committee in your prayers that they may discern wisely a pastoral candidate for Bethel's Pastor of Outreach position. 🌈

## Fireside Chats

Pastor Mike has hosted Fireside Chats each Tuesday evenings to answer questions about the church, the Bible, etc. In October, Fireside Chats started branching 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 November, 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](mailto:christal@bethel-madison.org).

### Upcoming Fireside Chat Schedule

- Dec 8:** Pastor Mike with Walter Dewey (Foundation)
- Dec 15:** Pastor Mike with John Bauer (Strategic Plan)
- Dec 22:** Pastor Mike with St. Nicholas 🌈

# CHRISTMAS Flowers, Food Pantry & Homeless Ministry 2020

Please write **separate checks** for Poinsettias, Food Pantry & Homeless Ministry. The **Deadline is Monday, Dec 7**, to return this form and money to Bethel for donations to be included in the Bethel Weekly listing.

## POINSETTIA GARDEN

**CIRCLE ONE:** In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

X \$20 =

# OF PLANTS

TOTAL DUE

Flowers may be picked up starting Dec 28 or after. The deadline for all gifts to be recognized in the Bethel Weekly listing is Dec 7.

## HOMELESS MINISTRY

**CIRCLE ONE:** In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

AMOUNT

## FOOD PANTRY

**CIRCLE ONE:** In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

AMOUNT

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CASH/CHECK #

ENVELOPE #

PHONE

Return entire form to: Bethel Lutheran Church  
Attn: Christmas Giving  
312 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 53703



312 Wisconsin Avenue | Madison, WI 53703

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608.257.3577 | Email Christal Swigart: [christal@bethel-madison.org](mailto:christal@bethel-madison.org)  
Emergency Cell: 608.216.3600

## 2 ADVENT

Pastor John Swanson - Dec 6 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

## 3 ADVENT

Pastor John Swanson - Dec 13 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

- 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, DECEMBER 7

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

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)
- 7:00p Fireside Chats (Facebook)
- 8:00a Fireside Chats (YouTube)

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

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

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

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

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

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

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)

### PASTORAL STAFF

**Pastor Mike Brown - Lead Pastor**  
[pastormikebrown@bethel-madison.org](mailto:pastormikebrown@bethel-madison.org)

**Pastor John Swanson - Director of Congregational Life**  
[jswanson@bethel-madison.org](mailto:jswanson@bethel-madison.org)

### SUNDAY FLOWERS

**Nov 22:** Pulpit & Lectern Peace Lilies are given in honor of the service of Veterans by XYZ.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED  
DATED MATERIAL: REQUESTED IN HOME BY DEC 4 2020

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