

Bethelite

Photo by: Joe Garza
joegarzaphotography.com
608.445.7284

A publication of Bethel Lutheran Church distributed twice monthly.



bethelmadison.org/bethelite

A PURPOSE RUNS THROUGH IT

Blest to Be a Blessing

Pastor Mike Brown

Once in a while, I will get a phone call or email from a beloved member asking two normal, natural, honest questions. First, people ask how Bethel is doing during the pandemic and when it might resume in-person worship. Second, people ask 'why are we not having in-person worship right now like some other churches'?

I completely empathize with the interest in resuming in-person worship. It has been a very long time since we have been together for worship in person. It is difficult to go through what we are going through together. The reason Bethel is not offering in-person worship at this time like most other churches is because Bethel has been a Madison leader and good neighbor and good citizen for close to 160 years and we want to keep it that way. With my total support, Bethel's leadership has decided to honor both the letter and the spirit of Dane County's public health orders. In the interest of safeguarding public health, these orders place limits on the number of people various organizations and businesses are allowed to have in their spaces.

Churches are included in these public health orders under the category of "Mass Gatherings". A Mass Gathering is a setting where groups of people show up at the same time for the same event and then leave at the same time. This includes concerts and churches, which are settings

same. Or, they feel that they are able to offer a safe setting with masks and distancing to protect people. Or, they believe any government limitation on a religious service is a tyrannical move against God's ways. The churches that decided to offer in-person worship tend to be Roman Catholic, small fundamentalistic, and Missouri Synod churches. The vast majority of other churches, especially larger ones in Madison, have all decided to act first out of a concern for the neighbor.

While it comes at significant cost to us and to our personal desires and needs, Bethel has taken the same approach. We want to live out our love for Jesus by expressing love for our

neighbor. In this time, that means supporting local officials in their efforts to bring this pandemic under control.

By refraining from in-person worship at this time we contribute to the welfare and health of our neighbors and community. Churches that contribute in this way earn good

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Read Genesis 12:1-3

especially conducive to the spread of the coronavirus. Essentially, they put people and the public at greater risk.

Even though churches are included in the definition of a mass gathering, there are churches who have decided to offer in-person services anyway. Their rationale often includes the convictions that if Home Depot is permitted to open at 25% capacity, the church should be treated the

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will among the population and earn a future opportunity to address the community with an invitation to worship. By holding-off on offering in-person worship at this time, we help protect the health and lives of others in our community and more importantly, the health and lives of members of Bethel. By holding-off on offering in-person worship, we demonstrate to our neighbors that we care about them. In this clear and dramatic demonstration of care for the other, Bethel cuts new paths for the advancement and growth of the church. Our abiding by the Dane County public health orders is for a purpose. That purpose is to be a blessing to the community and to build Jesus' church. We are blest to be a blessing.

“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3) 🌈

Lent Bible Study

Oh, the Things We See



If you have ever had a group of people to “do life” with, then you know how important and powerful it can be. This year for the six weeks of Lent which begins February 17, Bethel encourages all members to become part of a Bethel-wide Small Group Bible Study. The Bible study, Oh, the Things

We See written by Pastor Mike, is focused on the Gospel of Mark and is full of fun and learning. If you are already part of a group, a women’s circle, a men’s group, or other, please let Pastor Mike know by email to pastormikebrown@bethel-madison.org. If you are not currently plugged into a group then please let Pastor Mike know. New groups are forming now and looking for members. 🌈

Upcoming Sermon Series: The Way – The Book of Mark



Beginning with the first Sunday of Lent this year, Pastor Mike begins a new series of messages on the Gospel of Mark. 2021 is the year of Mark in the lectionary and throughout the year the entire gospel is the main focus for the gospel readings in liturgical churches across the world. Join us this Lent for a deep dive into the book of the Bible that was the very first written gospel.

Feb 21: Making an About Face

Feb 28: Healing the Dark Side

Mar 7: Avoiding Food Fights

March 14: Hidden in Plain Sight

March 21: Pushing the Envelope

March 28: The Turning Point 🌈

Wow! That Was Fast

Bethel Now a Reconciling in Christ Congregation



In the previous issue of the *Bethelite*, you read the good news of Bethel's new welcome statement. For your encouragement and convenience, it is included on the back page of each *Bethelite*. The church council approved and adopted this statement as a fact, a promise, and a vision. Close on the heels of the Bethel council approval, Reconciling Works also accepted and approved this powerful statement.

What this means is that Bethel will be placed in listings, message boards, and other resources to alert people looking for a church home that welcomes people who are LGBTQIA. This is Reconciling Works special mission. It is an organization that helps congregations widen their welcome to specifically include gays and lesbians. But, as you can see for yourself, Bethel's welcome embraces a wide range of people.

We can give thanks to the Reconciling in Christ Steering Team for over a year of beautiful hard work. Thank you Pam Shellberg, David Clack, Sue Rogers, Hank and Sharon Starke, Matt Coppens, Drae Lick, Bonnie Orvick, Jeanne Hrovat, and Tom Solheim.



Their work has helped widen the welcome at Bethel, offered healing to those unwelcomed in the past, and encouraged Bethel on a path of growth and innovation.

“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” – Romans 15:7. 🌈

Congregational Meeting

January 24 at Noon



Bethel's annual meeting will take place on Sunday, the fourth Sunday of January at 12:00. It will be an online Zoom meeting and will follow the agenda prescribed by Bethel's constitution. The main agenda items include election of officers, new council members, delegates, and adopting a budget for 2021. Votes will be taken within the meeting via Zoom polls. The meeting will be automatically recorded. Please join us for this event. Bethel annual meetings require 100 voting members in attendance to have a quorum. Copies of the annual report are available on the Bethel website and by email. Hard copies are also available for pickup at the church or can be mailed by request.

Link to the meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/y3gu4sa9>

Webinar ID: 873 5136 2772

Passcode: 713381 🌈

ELCA Members in the 117th Congress



With the final election results in Georgia resolved, the 117th Congress has begun. Members were sworn into office on Jan. 3, 2021. Check out some of the Lutheran legislators who will serve our country in this new Congress.

ELCA-affiliated members Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, and Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., won their bids for reelection in November. They will rejoin their other Lutheran incumbent colleagues in the Senate, including ELCA members Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, and Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M.

Four Lutheran members of the U.S. House of Representatives will be exiting at the start of the 117th Congress. Lutheran members Rep. Denny Heck, D-Wash., and Rep. John Shimkus, R-Ill., announced their retirements last year and did not seek reelection. ELCA-affiliated congressman Heck won his bid for lieutenant governor of Washington state. Other members—Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn., and Rep. Xochitl Torres Small, D-N.M.—lost their bids for reelection in 2020. We wish them all the best in their next endeavors and appreciate their dedication to public service.

ELCA members returning to the House include Rep. John Carter, R-Texas; Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif.; Rep. Ed Perlmutter, D-Colo.; Rep. Scott Peters, D-Calif.; Rep. Chellie Pingree, D-Maine; Rep. Lloyd Smucker, R-Pa.; and U.S. Delegate Stacey Plaskett, D-Virgin Islands. Other self-described Lutherans who will be returning are Rep. Kelly Armstrong, R-N.D.; Rep. Jack Bergman, R-Mich.; Rep. Angie Craig, D-Minn.; Rep. Ron Estes, R-Kan.; Rep. Tracey Mann, R-Kan.; Rep. Donald Norcross, D-N.J.; and Rep. David Trone, D-Md.

Please keep these and all members of Congress in prayer. 🌈

Director of Finance Position Filled

Welcome Danielle Moyer



Bethel has been blessed yet again! Yay, God!!! After a productive search by Baker Tilly, Bethel has offered the position of Director of Finance to Danielle Moyer.

Danielle is a Wisconsin CPA who worked ten years at Wanger and Associates, a respected local non-profit accounting firm. Responsible for a wide range of duties like audits, developing financial systems, policies, and day to day transactions for some clients, Danielle comes extremely well prepared for her Bethel duties. Danielle began work at Bethel on January 19, working from home as often as is practical during the pandemic. All staff are encouraged to work from home when possible.

Danielle lives in Barneveld and is an active member of Barneveld Lutheran Church. Barneveld Lutheran is a partner and supporter of the Bethel Bike Ride in support of Bethel Horizons. She and many others at Barneveld Lutheran are regular and active participants in Bethel Horizons camps. Please welcome Danielle with a note card, phone call, or email to danielle@bethel-madison.org. 🌈

Grief Support Group Forming

Pastor Mike invites you to join him and John Hueschen, a Bethel Stephen Minister and licensed therapist and bereavement counselor to a new group for those going through the grief process. Beginning on Wednesday, January 27 at 7pm and continuing on Wednesdays for four weeks until February 24, you will find comfort and hope as you walk through the valley. To sign up, please email Pastor Mike at pastormikebrown@bethel-madison.org or call the church at 608.257.3577. All are welcome.



Login Link: <https://zoom.us/j/96664323007> 🌈

Inside Out Treasure Hunt Underway



Bethel has created a Treasure Hunt as a part of the Inside Out sermon series. This Treasure Hunt is actually a Geocache experience. It takes treasure hunters from house to house over 5 weeks using GPS coordinates to find their way. Using a phone for directions each week takes treasure hunters to a new destination with a new treasure chest.

The purpose of this activity is to help break the tension, boredom, and stress of the pandemic by giving families a reason to get outside, share some silliness, solve a puzzle and through it all, share their internal lives by identifying fear, anger, joy, contempt, and sadness. Each stop along the way provides a piece of a puzzle and a very special bead. Each Sunday, as coordinates for the location are emailed to registered participants, treasure hunters take up to one week to find each treasure chest location. After collecting and assembling all the puzzle pieces, treasure hunters read the hidden message with the special glasses with red lens. This final message lead hunters to the final destination.



At the final treasure chest, you have reached the end and receive even more treasure beads. These beads get assembled into a string of prayer beads to be used during Lent. The prayer beads are an excellent way to pray and to teach children how to pray and meditate their way through difficult times. Instructions for putting together and using the prayer beads are with the last treasure chest. 🌈

Continuing a Legacy of Jail Ministry

Bethel Community Services Provides \$9,100



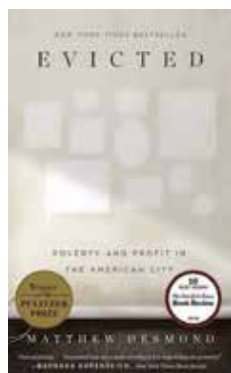
“I was in prison and you visited me.”

Bethel has been a decades-long leader and supporter of jail ministry at the Dane County Jail. Beginning in 2020, Bethel’s financial support came from the recently rebooted Bethel Community Services Corporation (BCS). The BCS is the social services outreach arm of Bethel Lutheran Church. In 2020, the BCS provided \$9,100 in support to the jail ministry. Over the course of a year, jail chaplains join hundreds, if not thousands of men and women in their pain and sorrow. Relying on the strength of their faith traditions, chaplains help men and women identify God’s presence in their lives and accompany them on the highly personal and deeply spiritual process of experiencing healing, hope, strength, and courage for themselves and their futures. 🌈

Welcome to the ACTJAM Big Read for January



Welcome to our January Big Read of *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond, sponsored by Bethel's Homeless Ministry and Bethel Builds, Bethel's Habitat for Humanity volunteers.



What is home? Many of us are having an up close and personal experience with our homes. We're like turtles, said one Bethel member, pulling in and hunkering down.

The pandemic is driving many under the covers. But it's also driving many out the door.

In the U.S., the Census Bureau reported in December that 1 in 5 adult renters (14.3M) were not caught up on rent, including 29 percent of Black renters, 26 percent of Latino and 14 percent of white renters. Further, 1 in 4 renters living with children are not caught up.

Housing – or lack of - in Wisconsin and Madison is an equal opportunity crisis. Like the coronavirus which shows no partiality by race, more of our Black neighbors are suffering from the worst effects of the housing crisis. Improving it for all will disproportionately improve it for our Black neighbors.

Eviction is just one piece of the problem. For many, being shown the **door out** is the result of policies and practices that go way back. To fix the problem at the root, we have to understand how we got here.

Ironically, we're using eviction as the **door in** to the story of what happened in Madison, in Wisconsin and the upper mid-west to create segregated pockets of housing, cycles of poverty and extreme wealth gaps today. For example:

- Madison was 'red lined' in the 1930s, resulting in racially segregated neighborhoods. That legacy persists today.
- Many Madison neighborhoods had racially restrictive covenants, the language of which remains in deeds although no longer enforceable.
- In Wisconsin today, more than 70 percent of white families own their homes while just 27 percent of Black families do. We have the 8th largest home ownership disparity gap in the nation.

Getting Started:

- Order a copy of *Evicted* from your library or bookstore. Or, borrow one of Bethel's community copies available at the reception desk.
- Listen to the ACTJAM podcast with Laura Dresser from Center on Wisconsin Studies (COWS) discussing Wisconsin's extreme racial disparities, including housing. <https://tinyurl.com/ybsgpg8g>
- Listen to *Evicted* author Matt Desmond. <https://tinyurl.com/y87xajcx>
- Download the *Evicted* discussion guide and make plans to discuss the book with a friend, your family or Bethel group. There will also be discussions open to all. <https://tinyurl.com/y9wjdo8f> 🌈

ACTJAM Book Discussion Group

For Bethel folks interested in discussing *Evicted*, the January "Big Read," sponsored by ACTJAM, there will be several Zoom book discussion groups in early February. Stay tuned for dates and times. There are 35 free copies of *Evicted*, by Matthew Desmond, available now to Bethel members and friends, at the Bethel reception desk. Multiple copies are also available from the public library or your local bookstore. 🌈



Fireside Chats



Pastor Mike will continue to host Fireside Chats on Tuesday evenings. 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. 🌈

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.

Jan 7- Is This the End of College As We Know It?

Jan 14 - Does Bethel Have a Future?

Jan 21 - Gayle Sayers: Fact and Legend

Jan 28 - Saying It's So Doesn't Make It So

If you have questions, contact Larry Larrabee at 608.249.9982.

The Bethel **Men's Friday Book Study** will begin to read *The Second Mountain* by David Brooks on Friday, Jan 15. The Book Study's pandemic schedule requires meeting via Zoom every Friday morning at 8am. Men wishing to participate should contact Larry Larrabee in advance to obtain the Meeting ID and Passcode. His contact information is 608.249.9982 or lar3car2@gmail.com.

Wednesday Night Live Streamed Lord's Supper - Join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm for the Lord's Supper. Every Wednesday until we are able to celebrate in person, Pastor Mike will lead us in a live-streamed Lord's Supper at 6:30pm on Bethel's Facebook or you can watch any time after 8pm on our YouTube channel. Everyone is asked to have wine/juice and bread ready for the evening's communion.

Thursday Contemplative Scripture Reading (Zoom)

Join Pam Shellberg for a time of interactive, contemplative scripture reading. During each 45-minute period, we will read a passage from scripture and reflect on it by way of the ancient practice of lectio divina. This involves engaging the scripture with our minds, imaginations, and hearts – along with good measures of silence and sharing. Links provided in the Thursday Daily Devotion email for joining this group. Send any questions to Pam Shellberg at pam@bethel-madison.org.

Use Amazon Smile and Donate to Bethel - Do you shop online using Amazon? Did you know you can donate to Bethel by doing your regular shopping through Amazon? By using Amazon Smile, they will donate 0.5% of the price of your purchase automatically to Bethel! How can you set this up? It's Easy!

1. Go to: <http://smile.amazon.com> (we recommend bookmarking this page for easy accessing)
2. Under the search bar click on the word "Supporting" in orange letters.
3. Select "Change your charity".
4. Type "Bethel Lutheran Church, Madison, WI"
5. Click the Search Button.
6. Click the Select button.

That's it! You will now be donating to Bethel every time you make a purchase. (Remember to use the Amazon Smile web page as that is how Amazon tracks your purchases for donation. If you use the regular Amazon page, your donation won't be recorded.) Your Contact: christal@bethel-madison.org

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

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

Bethel on Instagram - Scan the image below to follow us!





312 Wisconsin Avenue | Madison, WI 53703

Bethelite (USPS 053-160) Published bi-weekly by Bethel Lutheran Church
608.257.3577 | Email Christal Swigart: christal@bethel-madison.org
Emergency Cell: 608.216.3600

4 EPIPHANY

Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 24 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

5 EPIPHANY

Pastor Mike Brown - Jan 31 at 7:30am, 9am, & 11am

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

- 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, JANUARY 25

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

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26

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

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28

- 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, JANUARY 29

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

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30

- 9:00a Daily Devotion (Email)

PASTORAL STAFF

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

Pastor Roger Black - Visitation
roger@bethel-madison.org

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DATED MATERIAL: REQUESTED IN HOME BY JAN 22 2020

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We welcome you to Bethel. We see you as we see ourselves, vulnerable to the challenges of human relationships, and deeply beloved by God.

We welcome you who have ever felt excluded by the church because of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental ability, family or economic status, or for a reason known only to you. We welcome you whether church life is familiar to you or your faith journey is new, whether you are certain in your beliefs or unsure what you believe.

We invite you here because God is inviting you to be here. Striving to create a place where all feel safe and can find peace, let us share the unconditional love of God and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, work together to extend grace, mercy, and justice – within Bethel, in our communities, and the world.



Hearing Loop available in all our worship spaces.