



I'VE GOT YOUR BACK

Jesus loves you. Walk with him.

BETHELITE

AUGUST 4, 2021: VOL. 70, NO. 15

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WHAT FAMILY MEANS TO ME

One of the stories I have shared since I have been at Bethel involves my cousins, Ronnie and Richard Sparks. Since August is Pride Month in Madison, I thought it would be good to repeat it here. Ronnie was a year or two older than Richard. Both walked back and forth from home to their elementary school each day that it wasn't raining. Being West Texas (Odessa), it almost never rained and the ground stayed dry and hard most of the year. One day as Richard was walking home, somehow he got into a fist fight. The other boy was a grade older than Richard and at least two sizes larger. Because of that fact alone, Richard was getting the worse of it as they kicked up a cloud of dust and other kids formed a circle around them shouting and cheering them on. At some point, Ronnie (Richard's brother) came upon the scene and when he saw his little brother getting pummeled by an older larger kid, he jumped in the middle of it. Ronnie was what they used to call a real "scrapper" and was pretty good at taking care of himself in a fight. As Ronnie had the other boy pinned to the hard West Texas ground, a friend of the other boy jumped in to grab a hold of Ronnie and free his friend. Suddenly, Ronnie was faced with two opponents in defense of his little brother. When Richard saw this, he turned and ran home, and when he busted through the kitchen screen door, his mother (my Aunt Betty), said "Boy! What in the world are you doing?! Why are you so dirty and scuffed up?!" Between deep breaths, Richard blurted out that he had been in a fight and Ronnie came along to help out, but then another boy jumped in, and when he saw that he



First ever family photo
of Pastor for a church
pictorial directory



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decided to run home. Betty asked, “Well then, where is Ronnie?!” Richard said, “He’s still back there fighting!” To which Betty barked at him “Boy! You get back there in that fight and help your brother!” And, he did. This is one of the lessons we were taught as kids: when someone in your family is involved in a fight, you step in there with them.

This lesson also applies to Bethel because Bethel is a family of God. People who belong to our church belong to each other. We are family, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, and siblings. When Jesus was teaching and someone came to tell him “Your mother and brothers, and sisters are looking for you,” Jesus said “And who is my mother, brother, and sister?” Then pointing to the crowd, he said “here is my mother, and



Tips for standing with your LGBTQIA+ family members

brother, and sister.” As a part of Jesus’ family, we are family at Bethel.

This is important because we live in a world where, at times, we find ourselves in fights. We fight for our marriages. We fight for our children or grandchildren. We fight for our health. We fight for all manner of important things. And because we are family, we are to have each other’s backs. During 2020 and 2021, Bethel adopted a welcome statement that expresses clearly and beautifully who is included in the family. If you have not read it, please do in this newsletter. It is quite strong and lovely.

The reason we took it upon ourselves to spell it out for ourselves and others who is welcome to be part of our community, our family, is

because historically there have been people who have been repeatedly told that they are not welcome as they are and for who they are. These are people in the LGBTQIA community, gays and lesbians, the queer community. We are making it known publicly that people who are queer are welcome and safe here among us.

We are family.
—Sister Sedge

We will defend them and support them. Our welcome does not stop there, though. We want you to know that we have your back, no matter if you are rich or poor, black or white or Latino or Asian, Republican or Democrat, old or young, male or female or trans, with a home or without a home, short or tall, thin or wide, we have your back. There is enough fighting and violence in the world that we will not have it between ourselves. In this Christian community of Bethel, we will stand with you and fight alongside you for as long as it takes. 🌈

SERMONS FEATURING BLOCKBUSTER MOVIES



Stories have power, and almost nothing captures the power of story better than a good movie. With this in mind, Bethel's "God on Film" sermon series will use scenes from Hollywood films to help illustrate God's story in Scripture. The whole idea of this series comes straight from the methods of Jesus. Just a quick glance through the Gospels will show you how many times Jesus used parables—captivating and culturally relevant stories that helped people more clearly understand the grace and hope of God. It doesn't matter your age, gender or the culture you grew up in—everybody is captivated by a good story. In our modern world, movies are a primary form of story-telling. But movies are more than just stories. According to film critic, Josh Larsen, movies are prayers. In his book, *Movies Are Prayers*, Larsen believes that movies are our way of telling God what we think about this world and our place in

it. He states, "Movies can be many things: escapist experiences, historical artifacts, business ventures, and artistic expressions, to name a few...They are expressions of raw emotion, naked vulnerability, and unbridled rage. They often function in the same way as prayers, communicating our deepest longings and joys to a God who hears each and every one." Because of the power of movies, there aren't many rooms where we will laugh, cry, cheer and boo with 100-plus strangers, but a movie theater is one of those, and all of a sudden strangers become united around a common thing: story. Jesus knew that well and would use an earthly story to help unite people around an eternal one. That is what we hope to do through this series. Video clips from a different film will be shown at 11am worship and referred to at 7:30am and 9am each week during worship. Because of copyright restrictions, actual video clips of movies will

*Movies
are
prayers.*

not appear online or on television. Bethel's "God on Film" series presents a tremendous opportunity to invite someone to church. Our biggest prayer for this series is that people would experience the story of God in a way they've never before seen or known. "God on Film" will run during weekend worship services from August 8-29.



August 8

From
Victimhood
To
Victory



August 15

From
False Self
To
True Self



August 22

From
Closet
To
Public



August 29

From
Escapism
To
Engagement



Bethel Supports Seminarists

THANKS TO THE BETHEL ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

Bethel has a rich history of helping to encourage and financially support called students studying at an ELCA seminary on an ordination track. Our Endowment Foundation has been in existence for 57 years, and just after its 25th anniversary, in 1990, we enhanced the regular and steady assistance to not only Bethel members, but also to Dane County residents who were on this same path.

Since that time, very few years have not had at least one Bethel member at seminary, and this fall Heather Moen will begin classes with Wartburg in Dubuque, Iowa. Of the more than 100 unique seminarists since 1990, roughly a fifth of them were initially nurtured in their faith at Bethel. 🌈



ANSWER

Bisexuality, My Call, and Lutheran Theology

Bethel Lutheran is my home congregation and I owe much of my faith formation to this church community and Bethel Horizons. I have been heavily involved in the church since I was in preschool and found church as a safe haven to learn and grow. Grow up, grow in faith, grow into who God made me to be. I am very lucky that I had continuous support in general, and support towards answering the call to ministry.

I came out as bisexual and officially said yes to God's call to ministry within weeks of each other. God has gifted me with my bisexuality and my warmth and ability to create community and comfortable spaces. And in those spaces I'm inviting people to be their full selves. And God continues to invite me to be my full self. By fully embodying myself and creating a space where others can ask questions, wrestle with faith and doubt,

as mine and genders that differ from mine-same and different), in straight circles I'm sometimes considered too queer, and in queer circles, too straight. This both/and identity has led me to finding connection with people of similar experiences and beliefs. In these spaces there's this understanding that to many we straddle these identities, but in reality we (bisexuals and any other sexuality attracted to multiple genders) have these complete and distinct identities. I feel like this relates to Luther's theology of Saint and Sinner. I am both things at the same time, forever in this cycle, this loop of Saint to Sinner and back again, just as I am attracted to people of the same gender as myself and those of genders that differ from myself, constantly cycling between who I may be more attracted to. Bisexuality is it's own, separate



I am able to share the Good News with those hungry for it. It's amazing that by just being myself, I've heard from many people that they didn't think it was possible for anyone to be a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and be religious, let alone clergy and that by seeing many people be exactly that, they've found hope and affirmation.

As a bisexual woman (my definition of bisexual is attracted to genders the same

identity where it's not always a 50/50 split of who you're attracted to. Many go through phases as still being attracted to multiple genders, but strongly preferring a particular one. Both of these boil down to one identity though, Christian and Bisexual. All people are simultaneously saint and sinner. And there's grace in this perpetual cycle. God still looks at me and calls me beloved. God looks at the LGBTQIA+ community and calls us beloved. 🌈

ING THE CALL



Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" —Isaiah 6:8

Anne Wickland recently graduated from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and is awaiting a call.

ARE YOU WONDERING ABOUT A CALL?

Candidacy is the name of the process in the ELCA that raises up, prepares, certifies and places public leaders. Public ministers include ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament and lay Ministers of Word and Service.



For more information contact Robyn at robynz@scsw.org

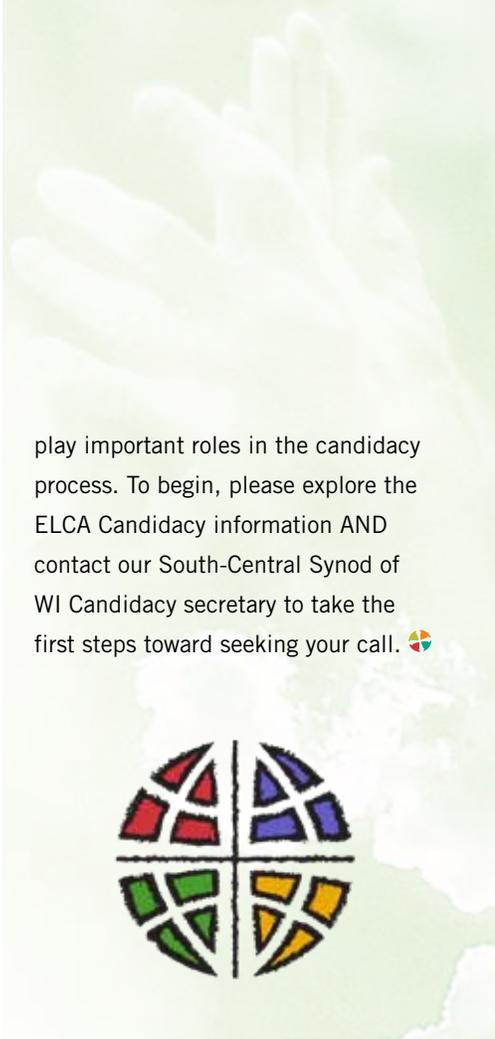
wells up within them, as well as the call that is affirmed by others in the church.



Candidates, their family and friends; congregations, along with campus and outdoor ministries that nurture and develop faith; synods and their candidacy committees;

seminaries and their faculties and staff; and staff from the churchwide organization, all

Candidates for public ministry make themselves available to discernment that considers both the call that



play important roles in the candidacy process. To begin, please explore the ELCA Candidacy information AND contact our South-Central Synod of WI Candidacy secretary to take the first steps toward seeking your call.



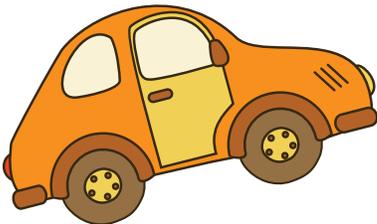


The Trophy Husbands

PARKING LOT CONCERT & WORSHIP

Aug 8
Sunday
4-6pm

August's parking lot concert and worship service will be led by The Trophy Husbands band. Starting at 4pm, the band will wow you with exciting versions of classic church hymns as well provide other entertaining music before and after. Park in the parking lot or in the city garage and pull up your lawn chair. A food truck will be on site to supply all your needs for sustenance. 🍴



OUTDOOR FAMILY WORSHIP & MOVIE

Bethel Parking Lot
Aug 21, Saturday, 6:30pm

Bethel brings a second season of creative community programming with a new series of Outdoor Family Worship and Movie events. The third of these takes place at the Bethel parking lot. Inspired by memories of drive-in movie theaters from years gone by, Bethel creates an Outdoor Movie experience with high-definition video, powerful sound systems, FM radio transmission, and a stage.

The third outdoor movie will be the award-winning movie, *Cars 2*, from Pixar. Prior to showing the movie, Bethel will offer a short worship experience of song, scripture, and a

message that relates to the movie, helping people learn something of Jesus in the movie.

Please join us and others from around Madison for this unique and wonderful outreach experience. Simply show up by 6:30pm or come earlier to volunteer. To offer your help as a volunteer, please contact Cindy at cindy@bethel-madison.org.

This event is made possible by a generous grant from the Bethel Endowment Foundation.



DISNEY · PIXAR
Cars

**OUTDOOR FAMILY
WORSHIP & MOVIE**

- Saturday, Aug 21 at 6:30pm
- Bethel Lutheran Church Parking Lot
- 30-40min worship followed by Disney's *Cars 2* movie

BETHEL
www.bethel-madison.org/cars2



ACTJAM BIG WATCH FOR AUGUST

The documentary 13TH is the ACTJAM Big Watch for August. 13th continues our look at racism in the justice system by examining the roots of mass incarceration in the 13TH amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The amendment, ratified on Dec 6, 1865, ended slavery *except as punishment for a crime*.

Filmmaker Ava DuVernay shows that the U.S. prison system which statistically imprisons Black men disproportionately and allows for their servitude, has taken advantage of America's Black population. As Bryan Stevenson, author of *Just Mercy* says, "Slavery didn't end in 1865, it just evolved." Watch Stevenson discuss the issue here: <https://tinyurl.com/pvu5tjcp>

In Wisconsin, inmates with regular prison jobs earn between 9 cents and 42 cents an hour, while those working for Badger State Industries (BSI) earn between 79 cents and \$1.40. BSI inmates make signs, furniture and textiles. The Wisconsin Department of Administration mandates that all state

agencies and UW campuses purchase office furniture through BSI.

Featuring a wide range of experts including Bryan Stevenson, 13TH examines the criminalization of Black persons. In Wisconsin, a 2013 study by the UW-Milwaukee using 2010 census data, revealed that Wisconsin has the highest rate of incarceration of Black men in the country. The incarceration rate for African Americans is 10 times that of white people.

13TH is available for free viewing on YouTube: <https://tinyurl.com/4szyzvbn>

We recommend the discussion guide provided by Dr. Alex Gee's Nehemiah Center in Madison that you can download here: <https://tinyurl.com/3u2vr2kv>

Parents can read reviews by other parents on Common Sense Media to decide if the film is appropriate for their child. 🌈

Donate LWR Kits

Often, when natural disasters strike or when war drives families from their homes, our hearts ache with compassion, but we don't know how to help. Making Lutheran World Relief Kits is a simple, fun and tangible way to offer comfort to those suffering and express love to our neighbors. Visit <https://lwr.org/kits> for a detailed list of the four different types of kits we are gathering. Bring the kits or the materials for the kits to Bethel's Good Shepherd Chapel during the month of August, Monday—Friday from 9am-4pm, and on Sunday mornings from 6:30am-Noon. 🌈



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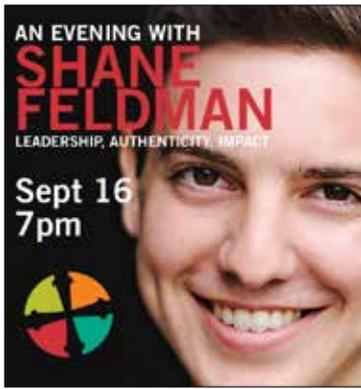
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BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Avenue
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Sept 16 at 7pm

This September, Bethel resumes its speaker series with the appearance of motivational speaker Shane Feldman. Known best for starting the world's largest youth-led change movement, Count Me In, Shane is a much sought-after speaker by organizations, corporations, and governments.

Shane is recognized by **The White House**, **The Prime Minister of Canada**, and **The United Nations** for his achievements in community leadership. He helps audiences activate the leader within and connect more authentically with colleagues and customers to see greater engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

Attendance is limited to the first 1,000 people with a ticket. Bethel members have the first opportunity for tickets. The tickets are free and available on Eventbrite at: shanefeldman.eventbrite.com.

More detailed info:

www.bethel-madison.org/shane



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[bethelmadison](https://twitter.com/bethelmadison)



[BethelLutheranTV](https://www.youtube.com/BethelLutheranTV)

Worship Times: Sunday at 7:30am & 9am - Traditional; 11am - Contemporary