

MALACHI 3:10

¹⁰ BRING ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE, THAT THERE MAY BE FOOD IN MY HOUSE, AND TRY ME NOW IN THIS, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS, IF I WILL NOT OPEN FOR YOU THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN, AND POUR DOWN YOUR SLEIGH DRUMS.

BETHELITE

NOVEMBER 17, 2021: VOL. 70, NO. 22

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TESTING GOD'S PROMISES

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien writes about a kingdom called Gondor which for many years has had no king. While waiting for the rightful heir to come and claim his throne, a series of stewards are placed in charge to manage the land. The steward in charge at the time of the events described in the book is named Denethor. He has two sons, Boromir and Faramir. As steward of the land, Denethor has the power of the king but without the title and without the full measure of honor. He could make decisions and pass judgment. He received the respect and admiration of the people of the land. But his primary task was to do whatever was best for the land in the absence of its rightful ruler. In all he did, he was to remember his position—to remember that he was not, and never would be, the king. As a constant reminder of his temporary position he was forbidden to rule seated on the king's throne. While the king was allowed the full honor of sitting upon the throne, surrounded by splendor, the steward was consigned to rule from a plain, unadorned chair that sat at the foot of the throne. Denethor was not a very good steward. He dreaded the day the king would return, for he knew that with the return of the king, would come his own return to obscurity. He jealously guarded the power that had been given him and did not look forward to the day when he would have to relinquish the kingdom to its rightful owner. This attitude affected his every decision, and he often ruled based on his own desire for preservation rather than on the basis of what would be best for the kingdom he was sworn to protect.



God puts it all in our hands!



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Color Bethelite provided in part by Bethel Endowment Foundation

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Denethor became corrupt. He claimed what had been entrusted to him as his own rightful possession. This claim led to his own corruption.

This concept of stewardship is one that has been largely lost to our time and our culture. We understand ownership, borrowing, leasing, and mortgaging but have little knowledge of stewardship. Yet, it is a bedrock principle in the Bible. Scripture tells us that we are to see everything we have as belonging to God. We are stewards, not owners. Psalm 24:1 states "Everything in all the creation belongs to God." This can be a hard truth to accept. It certainly was for Denethor. Drunk with corruption and power and unwilling to hand over the kingdom, the steward of Gondor, eventually took his own life, ending his years of poor stewardship. He would rather die than give up what he thought was



Make all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can. — John Wesley

his. He would rather die than humble himself before the king.

Denethor's son, Faramir, took his father's place as the next in a long line of stewards. And no sooner did he do this than the king, Aragorn, returns to the throne. Faramir faces the same decision as his father. And when the new king is crowned, it is Faramir who leads the cries of "Behold the king!" Faramir was everything his father was not. He was a good and faithful steward who looked forward to the return of his king and who was willing and ready to hand what had been entrusted to him to its rightful owner. Faramir showed that he was trustworthy. And his trust was rewarded. As followers of Jesus Christ and believers in scripture, we are promised a reward for being trustworthy stewards. In Malachi 3:10, God

says through the prophet:

"Bring the full 10% into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing."

Putting God to the test.

This is the only verse in the Bible where the Almighty invites us to "test" God. "Try me," God declares. And you will see how I flood your life with the good life. Karin and I can say that this is absolutely true. We have been tithers

our entire marriage. God loves, forgives, and blesses us no matter what we give. That is true. But there is a goodness in life that comes from tithing that cannot be experienced any other way. Try it! Try God! 🌈

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Seeks Recommendations



Bethel's Nominating Committee is soliciting nominations from members of the congregation to serve in several leadership capacities. First and foremost, Bethel's 15 person Church Council will have openings beginning in February of 2022.

These positions will be filled by a vote of the congregation at the Annual Meeting on January 23, 2022. Terms on Church Council are three years. Individuals are limited to serving two consecutive terms. Council members also serve as liaisons to the various ministry and resource teams, which typically results in two meetings a month for most council members. The Nominating Committee looks for people who are members of Bethel who are committed to Christ and to Bethel. Experience serving

on one of the Resource or Ministry Teams is preferred. An ability to listen well to others, to collaborate, to speak openly and collegially are very important. The Bethel Church Council is grounded by the Bethel constitution, collaborates in Team Ministry,

and implements the Bethel Strategic Plan. To make a nomination, please contact Kim Kindschi at kkindschi@gmail.com or Mimi Troutman at mimi.troutman@gmail.com.

We want you!

Other positions that the Nominating Committee will be looking to fill include: Representatives to the Oakwood and Skaalen Boards, and Delegates to the Assembly of the South Central Synod of Wisconsin. 🌈

Invitation to Generosity

November 29
Pledges

This year's annual stewardship campaign highlights how generosity is a concrete example of God's presence in our lives. To help you express your generosity, Bethel is sending out a stewardship packet. The items in this packet are meant to be used in conjunction with weekend worship. A pamphlet, *A Generous Life: The Beauty in Giving* will give you a Biblical approach to thinking about money and giving. A pledge card and return envelope is provided for you to make a financial commitment to Bethel in 2022 as part of God's ongoing presence in your life.

Please bring or mail in a completed pledge card to the church by Nov 29. In addition to sharing your financial commitment, we also want to hear how you are doing personally. For this, we have included a "Spiritual Vitality Check." Feel free to say as much or as little as you wish. 🌈





ADVENT CALENDAR

A guide to the Journey

The word “journey” has its origins in Latin and French, having long ago meant “daily” or “by day.” It referred to a fairly short period of time – just a day’s work, just a day’s travel. Today we tend to think about journeys as travels that take a long time, or as trips that will take us over great distances. Perhaps even more, we use the word metaphorically, to speak of how we traverse all life’s challenging and changing circumstances – our emotional and spiritual journeys.

This year’s Advent calendar invites you to embrace that older understanding of a journey. Take the season day-by-day. Try not to get too far ahead of yourself. Not miss what each day might hold as we reach for the good news of Christmas. Let the calendar be your map and field guide for each day’s journey this Advent season. 🌈



ADVENT

Stretching Time with Jesus

Advent is a sometimes misunderstood stretch of time. It is a span of time taut with anticipation as Biblical stories spring back and forth between journey and arrival. During Advent we find ourselves wandering the open space between Christ’s first and second comings. The stories focus on a feeling of being in-between, neither fully here nor fully there. We are all on a journey of some sort. The Advent journey anticipates both the new life in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the new life in the culmination of universal history in Jesus Christ.

To support you in your Advent journey, Bethel has planned a special series of worship and

December 4/5: Ryan Panzer

Ryan is a familiar face to many at Bethel through his consulting work over the past year. He and his consulting partner, Michael Chan, have led Bethel on a journey to expand and strengthen Bethel’s online digital presence. While working at Google and another tech firm, Ryan heard God call him to seminary. Now Ryan combines his expertise in digital technology and theology to help Christian communities tell their stories.

December 11/12: Dr. Michael Chan

Michael Chan is a professor of the Old Testament at Luther Seminary and also owns his own communication company. He partners



messages on the theme of journey and arrival, brought from four different perspectives. Each weekend of Advent at Bethel will have a different preacher.

November 27/28: Mike Brown

Pastor Mike started his journey with Bethel just over two years ago. Little did he know that less than a year into his work at Bethel, a worldwide pandemic would completely altar the landscape.

with Ryan to help churches connect their stories with people in their communities.

December 18/19: Heather Moen

Heather is a longtime and beloved member of Bethel. A former pediatrician, Heather has heard God’s call to ministry and is enrolled at Wartburg Theological Seminary in the Master of Divinity program. 🌈

EVENT

Journey



ADVENT @ HORIZONS

An intergenerational gathering fun, fellowship, and service, Advent @ Horizons invites you to sink into the Advent season surrounded by the beauty and peace of Bethel Horizons. It is a way to interrupt the pace of what is often a crazy busy time of year and just get away with family and friends.

You are invited to come Friday evening and stay through



Saturday afternoon – or just come for the day on Saturday. There will be plenty of fun things to do like tree decorating, caroling, gift making at Adamah, and sharing favorite family traditions. And there will be plenty of time to hike around Horizons, taking in its late fall/early winter beauty – or to just hang out and play board games, read, or get some needed rest.

The event will end with an family Advent worship service.

For more information on Advent @ Horizons and how to register go to: www.bethel-madison.org/adventathorizons. 🌈





BASIC NEEDS INSECURITY AMONG STUDENTS AT UW-MADISON

Sunday, Nov 21 at
10:30am in Good
Shepherd Chapel

Come to Bethel and hear how issues of hunger, housing, and mental health are affecting UW students and how the University and Campus Ministry are addressing those needs. You might be surprised to find out how and why these are very real struggles for students.

Guests will be the Rev. Emily Tveite, Campus Pastor and Director, Lutheran Campus Ministry at the UW, and Dr. Bjorn Hanson, Psychologist and Coordinator of Data, Quality, and Informatics at UW-Madison. 🌈

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Your 'Listening Ear' Could Be Just What This Ministry Needs

Stephen Ministry is a service offered by Bethel to individuals during periods of stress in their life. This service has been used by individuals dealing with issues such as death of a loved one, divorce, serious illness, job loss, divorce, difficult family situations and facing end of life.

Stephen Ministry provides caring, trustworthy, compassionate, confidential, faithful Christian care for individuals during these times by meeting with Care Receivers for one hour once a week. These meetings occur in a private setting without distractions. Men meet with men and women meet with women. During the meeting the Stephen Minister provides a listening, empathetic, non-judgmental ear for the Care Receiver. This is a process-oriented meeting that may include sharing bible and spiritual readings. Prayer is usually a part of each visit however Care Receives who decline prayer during the visit are assured that they are in the Stephen Minister's prayers. The length of the Stephen Ministry relationship is dependent on the nature of the situation. Issues such as loss related to aging or end of life may last as long as the Care receiver is

alive. Issues such as dealing with situations such as divorce would be only until the individual no longer felt the need for a Stephen Minister.

Training for new Stephen Ministers is done at Bethel. Classes are taught by Stephen Ministry leaders who have undergone an in-depth week of training by staff from Stephen Ministry St Louis. The class to become Stephen Ministers consists of pre-class readings and fifty hours of in-class meetings. These meetings occur in the evening for two hours a week with a week-end retreat toward the end of the classes. Textbooks and all reading material for the class is provided by Bethel. Upon completion of the class an individual is fully prepared to become a Stephen Minister.

John Hueschen (johnhueschen@gmail.com) and Joanne Ellingson (joanne906@msn.com) are the current Stephen Ministry Leaders. Anyone interested in learning more about the Stephen Ministry program can contact one of the leaders, a pastor or if you know someone who has been a Stephen Minister you could ask them about their experience with Stephen Ministry. 🌈

"What I needed the most was her unconditional love—to know that no matter what I shared with her, no matter what I'd done, she cared for me. Her care showed God's love for me."

Quote from
www.stephenministries.org



MAKING GREAT TRADITIONS TOGETHER

This recipe is from Pennsylvania Dutch settlers at the time of colonies. They made these at Thanksgiving and stored them in a stoneware crock until Christmas.

Ingredients

7 ounces light brown sugar
9 Tablespoons cocoa powder
10 ounces butter; softened
1 pinch cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 pound plain flour
(approximately)



Instructions

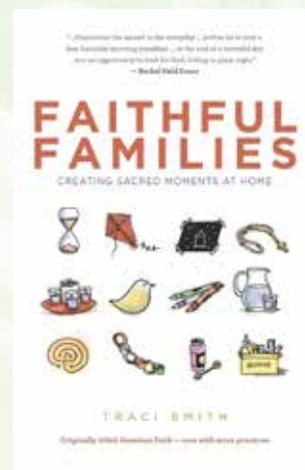
Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Mix all of the ingredients together, except for the flour. Add the flour slowly to the

rest of the mixture until it reaches the right consistency to roll out. The dough should be quite soft. (You may find it easier to knead it with your hands.

Roll out on a floured surface to a thickness of about 1/4 inch and cut into decorative shapes with small cookie cutters, a sharp knife or the rim of a glass.

Place on a greased baking sheet and bake in the oven for about 87 minutes. Remove from the oven while they are still soft and cool on a rack, then pack into crocks or jars. You may glaze. 🍪

MUST HAVE



Pastor and mother of three, Traci Smith offers ways to discover and develop new spiritual practices as a family, whether you're new to the faith or a lifelong follower. *Faithful Families* helps you: connect faith to your family's everyday life; add family faith moments into your daily routine; and respond to life's everyday challenges and opportunities with meaningful practices. Order yours, now. 🍪



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Christmas Giving 2021

ONLINE FORM:

www.bethel-madison.org/christmasgiving

Please write **separate checks** for Poinsettias & the Hephatha Strong Baby Sanctuary. The **Deadline is Monday, Dec 6**, to return this form & money to Bethel for donations to be included in the Bethel Weekly.

Poinsettia Garden

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

NAME CONT

BY

X \$20 =

OF PLANTS

TOTAL DUE

Flowers may be picked up after worship on Dec 25 or after.

Hephatha Strong Baby Sanctuary Donation

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

NAME CONT

BY

AMOUNT

CASH/CHECK #

ENVELOPE #

PHONE

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

BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

OCTOBER YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS RESULTS

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Over/(Under) Budget
REVENUES			
Offerings	1,233,374	1,305,083	(71,709)
Miscellaneous revenue	123,218	71,084	52,134
Non-operating revenue	263,544	268,213	(4,669)
Total Revenue	1,620,136	1,644,380	(24,244)
MINISTRY INVESTMENTS			
Staff	983,236	1,096,586	(113,350)
Ministry & Resource Teams	314,672	337,874	(23,202)
Benevolence	83,973	90,271	(6,298)
Administration	85,506	71,915	13,591
Other	344	2,083	(1,739)
Total Ministry Investments	1,467,731	1,598,729	(130,998)
Total Net Income (Loss)	152,405	45,651	106,754

A complete copy of the financial statements are posted to Realm;
you can access these through your Bethel Realm profile.



bethel_madison



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BethelLutheranTV

Worship Times: Sunday at 7:30am & 9am - Traditional; 10:30am - Contemporary
Saturday at 5pm - Acoustic Casual; Thursday at 5:30pm - Sacred Space