

Jesus loves you. Walk with him.



BETHELITE

FEBRUARY 2, 2022: VOL. 70, NO. 3

THIS ISSUE:

STAFFED 4 GOOD

*New Faces, Old Faces
Same Commitment*

SERMON SERIES

Welcoming the Stranger

ACTJAM BIG WATCH

*The Black Church:
This is Our Story, This Is Our Song*

HEPHATHA NEWS

*Our Mission Partner
in Milwaukee*

A NEW SONG IN AN ANCIENT LAND

*Bethel Series Ministry
in China*



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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LOVE OF A DIFFERENT SORT

Flowers, candy, pretty cards, gifts, love and romance in the air...that's what Valentine's Day is all about... right? At least, that's what the celebration has become in our modern-day society. What is the real story behind Valentine's Day? Most sources are legends and suggest that Saint Valentine's Day began with a feast in honor of an early Christian martyr named Valentinus and is celebrated in mid-February to coincide with his burial. Some believe it may also be celebrated at this time in an effort to Christianize the pagan Roman celebration of Lupercalia – a fertility festival related to agriculture, while others deny this link. Saint Valentinus is remembered as a loving, compassionate and heroic person.

He was a priest during the time when the Emperor Claudius II was persecuting the church, around 250 AD. Claudius had issued an edict that young men were not to marry, as single men made better soldiers. They would not be distracted by thoughts and care of their loved ones, but could focus on their call to duty. In the very permissive society of that day, the church still viewed marriage as sacred. Valentinus believed those who were in love should be able to marry within the Christian church and remain monogamous. He defied the emperor's orders, and performed marriages in secret. Valentinus was caught, imprisoned, tortured and eventually killed for performing forbidden marriages and for ministering to Christians. Legend is that while Valentinus was in prison, he prayed with and saw the healing of the blind daughter of his jailer Asterius. Asterius and



Love is patient and kind

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his entire household are said to have come to Christian faith as a result. It is widely believed that before his execution, Valentinus wrote a farewell letter to Asterius' daughter signed "Your Valentinus." This was the first "valentine." The celebration of Saint Valentine's Day has evolved from sending letters, poems, and homemade paper valentines to loved ones to a lucrative business for card publishers, florists, chocolatiers, and jewelers. While the celebration has become more materialistic, we can grasp the opportunity to show our love and concern for others through acts of kindness and compassion. We can share God's love with the world around us. We can make something good out of this special day.

Father Frank O'Gara (Whitefriar Street Church in Dublin, Ireland) said that what Valentine's Day means to him "is that there



No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.
—John 15:13

comes a time where you have to lay your life upon the line for what you believe. And with the power of the Holy Spirit, we can do that—even to the point of death." Let's take time to reflect on what Valentine's Day means, or can mean, to you.

Be inspired by these "love" verses from scripture:

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13)

"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this

world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:16-18)

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the

first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31)

Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy; is not boastful; is not conceited; does not act improperly; is not selfish; is not

provoked; does not keep a record of wrongs; finds no joy in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

"Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put

on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must [forgive]. Above all, [put on] love—the perfect bond of unity." (Colossians 3:12-14) 🌈

*For God
so loved
the world*



FEBRUARY 6-27

Bethel is in for a real treat in 2022 with a strong emphasis on gospel readings from the Gospel of Luke. Known as “Year C” in the Revised Common Lectionary, Luke’s time in the spotlight begins with a deep dive into the radical beauty of the Bible’s message on hospitality. Hospitality in the Bible is not what you might learn about from Miss Manners or Martha Stewart. It is not what you would read about in *Good Housekeeping* or *Better Homes and Gardens*.

Hospitality in the Bible

is a transformational experience where a stranger becomes a friend. Hospitality begins with the first chapter of the Bible when God creates the world and places Adam and Eve in the garden as God’s guests. As the owner of the garden, God makes a place for them, welcomes them, and provides for them.

Our world today seems more bent on hostility than hospitality. What author, Henri Nouwen,

wrote in 1975 is even more true in our day: “Our society seems to be increasingly full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people anxiously clinging to their property and inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy to suddenly

appear, intrude, and do harm.” Life in our society has become hyper-partisan and filled with rancor.

God offers a different way. It is a way where enemies become friends.

This happens in the

Bible through the experience of hospitality where the “other,” the “stranger” no longer stands before us as an unknown threat to be vanquished. Instead, the stranger stands before us as a mysterious guest bearing gifts of beauty and value. Join us for worship, in person or online, for four messages that promise to reduce your stress, lighten your worry, and enlarge your heart. 🌈



“Do not neglect to show kindness to strangers; for, in this way, some, without knowing it, have had angels as their guests.”

—Hebrews 13:2



Alice Mowbray
Director of Development & Administration
 23 years



Dona Meyer
Accounting Support
 17 years



Jeff Bittner
Coordinator of Hospitality
 13 years



STAFF

New Faces, Old Faces Same Commitment

It's been called "The Great Resignation", "The Great Reimagination," "The Great Reset" and "The Great Realization." Whatever it is called, the reality is the same for a majority of workers and employers across the nation. In 2021, 38 million people quit their jobs in search for a new opportunity. That is almost 25% of the national work force. Along with national trends, Bethel also saw its share of staff changes in 2021. But as an old adage goes, "the door swings both ways." The same door that opens to opportunities outside Bethel also opens to opportunities within Bethel. That said, as some staff have moved-on God has moved-in new staff who are tremendous people and bring powerful gifts. In the past twelve months, God has called Danielle Moyer to serve as Bethel's Director of Finance. And what an amazing job she has done! Anyone who attended the Budget

financial management systems and reports.

God also called Zach Busch to Bethel to serve as Minister of Liturgical Worship. Any who have had the opportunity to attend in-person or online worship for the 7:30am or 9am worship knows what an addition Zach has been. Not only is he an extremely good organist, pianist, and choir conductor, Zach is also a composer and arranger of traditional Lutheran choral music. From time to time, the congregation or choir will sing one of Zach's original compositions.

Kevin Honaker, a lifelong member of Bethel, was a surprise applicant for the Ministry Support position and brought with him an Master's in Business Administration from UW. Melissa Hathaway joined Bethel as the fulltime Director of Kids and Family Ministry. Her degree in early childhood education, love for children, previous work in ELCA churches,



Steve Lawrence
Building Manager
 6 years

Jim Drews
Sound Tech
 6 years

Katie Gerlach
Contemp Worship
 15 years

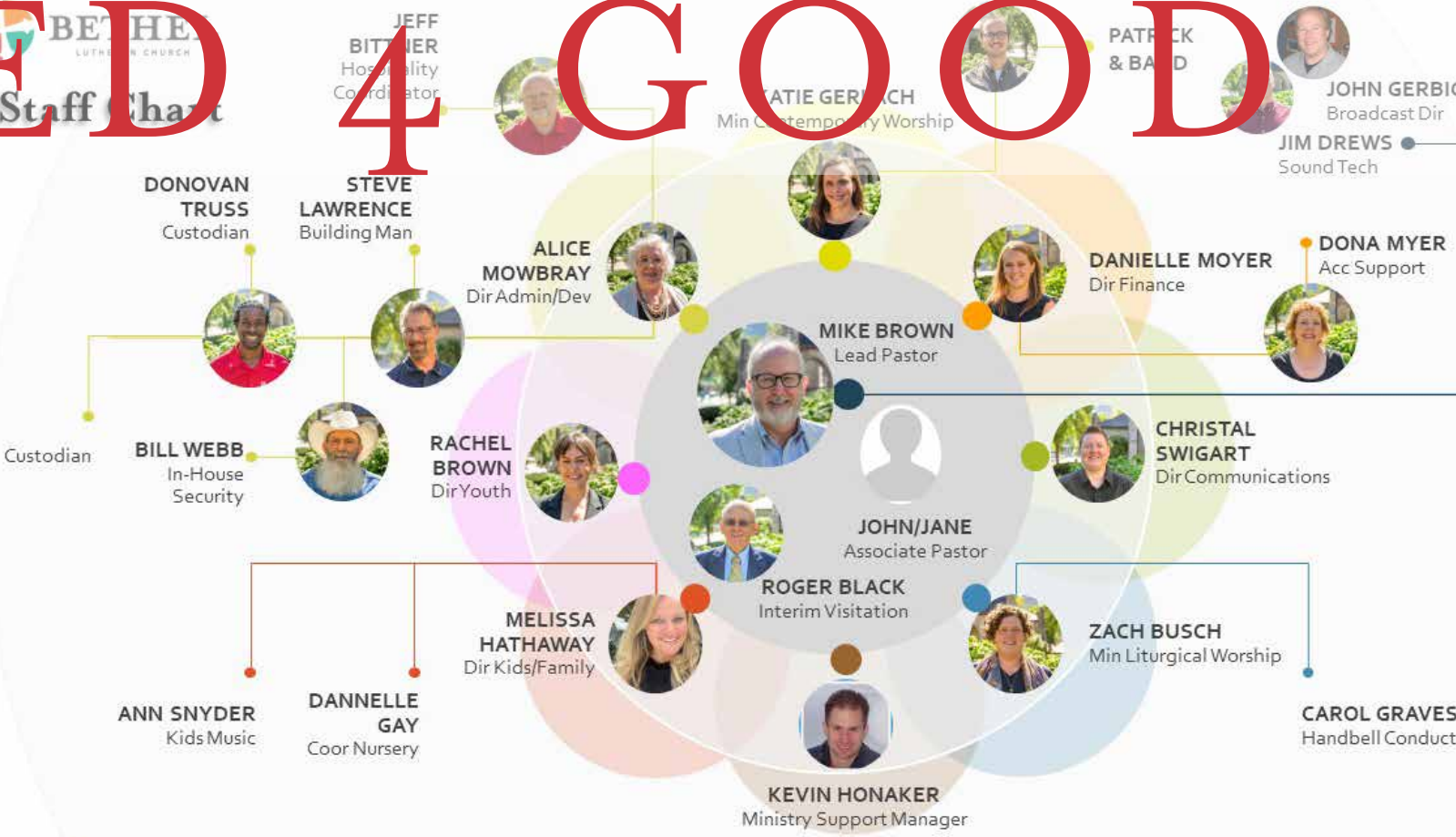
Patrick Kenney-Brown
Piano-Band
 15 years

Breakout meeting or the Annual Meeting got a glimpse into the clarity, accuracy, and transparency Danielle has brought to Bethel's

and Luther Seminary course work have gotten her off to a strong start. And Donovan Truss has been a Godsend as custodian. 🌈

Bethel Staff Chart

4 GOOD



Christ Is at the Center for Bethel Staff

Bethel's staff lives and works with a certain code, a set of expectations and mutual understanding, set forth in a document called *Christ the Center*. This document casts a vision for how staff will relate to each other in the work at Bethel.

See Christ in each other
"Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new."
 -2 Corinthians 5:16



Encourage each other
"So speak encouraging words to one another."
 -1 Thessalonians 5:11

Forgive each other
Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you. -Ephesians 4:32

Extend yourself for each other
Pour yourselves out for each other in acts of love. -Ephesians 4:1-3

Be genuine with each other
Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it.
 -Romans 12:10

Help each other
Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" -Romans 15:1-2

Believe in each other
So let's do it—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. -Hebrews 10:24

Listen to each other
Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue. -James 1:19

Encourage Self-care for each other
Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame.
 -Romans 12:11-13

Be unified with each other
The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind. -John 17:21

Be Christ for each other
"put on the Lord Jesus Christ,"
 -Romans 13:14. 🌈



HEPHATHA NEWS

As we go through this time after Epiphany, this time of “marching in the light of God,” we express gratitude from Hephatha to you who serve with us in the Gospel and who stand with us in our ministry commitment to God and the community of 18th and Locust. May I please share with you an incredible gift from God that you share in with us as you serve with us...EH'ZARIAH.

Eh'Zariah (pictured above), born in December, was given an emergency baptism at Children's Hospital on Dec 22 (I had the honor of also baptizing her father, at her bedside), with her mother and two nurses as witnesses. She has gone from ventilator and sedation in ICU to life at home as a healthy baby. She continues to be treated for some medical conditions and she thrives when her life was once thought to be over almost before it began.

We thank God for the ministry we share, for you as our partners, and for the light of Christ, who is with us always.

—Pastor Mary Martha 🌈

A NEW SONG IN AN ANCIENT LAND

Bethel Series Ministry in China

Rev. Qiu has taught the Bethel Series to over 1,000 pastors in mainland China mostly in secret at great personal risk to everyone, starting with Lin himself. These 1,000 trained Bethel Series pastors have taken their Bethel Series training to their congregations where it is taught in secret, sometimes at 3:30am. Today, people are in prison for allowing the Bethel Series to be taught in their churches. Today, Christians are arrested when caught taking the Bethel Series. As Rev. Qiu has been unable to visit China, he is teaching the Bethel Series in Chinese to Chinese American pastors.



Rev Lin Qiu

There are important Bethel connections starting in 2005 when Rev. Qiu attended the Bethel Series Teacher Training Seminar at Bethel and translated the Bethel Series into Mandarin Chinese. More recently in 2021, the Bethel Endowment Foundation has granted scholarship funds to help Chinese American Churches offer the Bethel Series to their congregations.

Join us Feb 20 at 10:30am in the Pentecost Room when Rev. Lin Qiu will briefly introduce the situation of Christianity in China. He will focus on the current situation of persecution faced by the Chinese church, and then, will introduce the development of the Bethel Series Ministry in China.

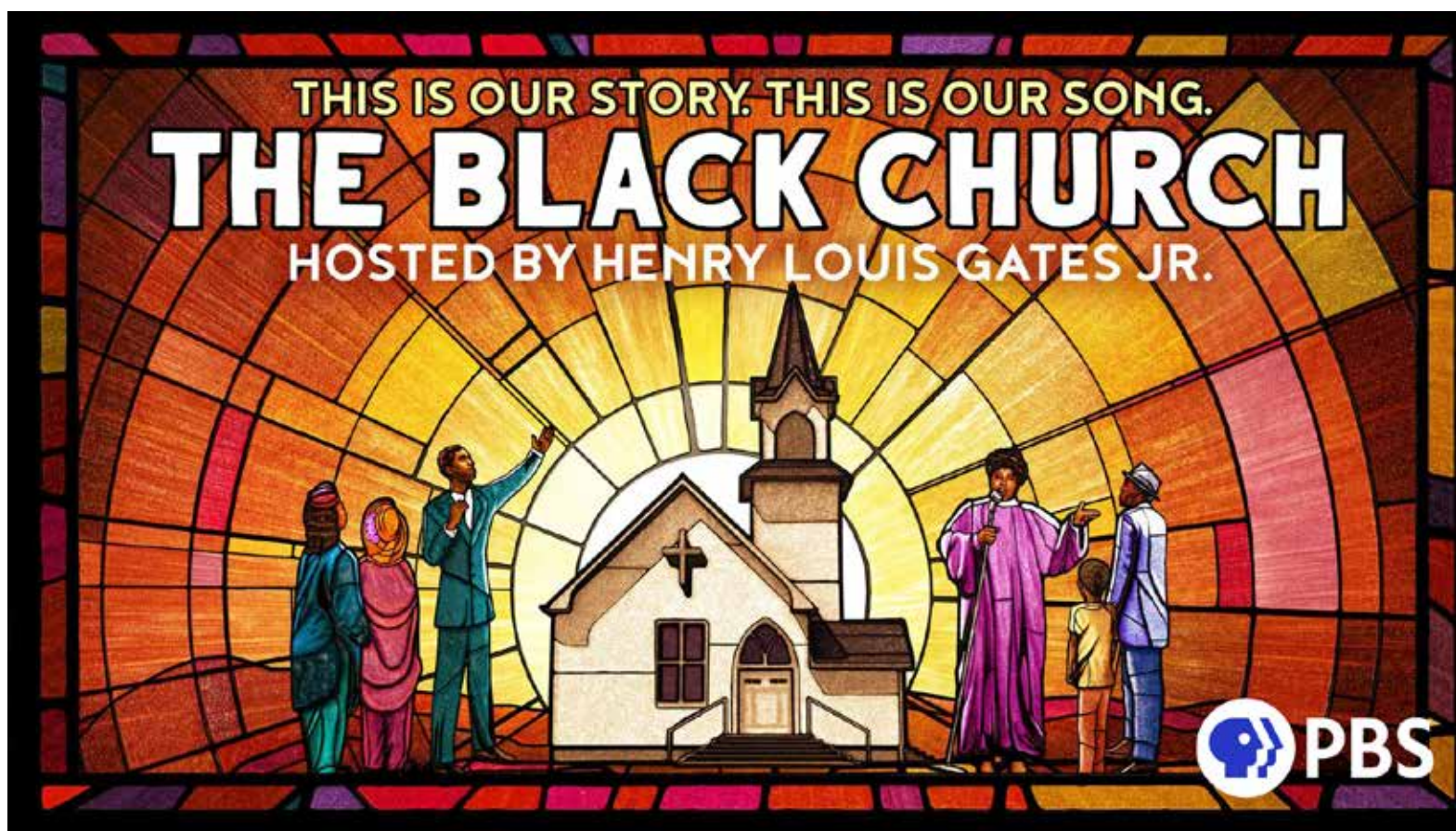
Rev. Lin Qiu Biography:

Rev. Lin Qiu was born in Beijing, China. He graduated from Renmin University of China, Chinese Culture Academy, and was a college teacher in Beijing before 1989. In 1991, he became a believer in the Chinese Lutheran Church in Honolulu

and got theological training at Regent College, Vancouver, BC, Canada. He was called by ELCA to St. Paul, Minnesota to establish the Minnesota Chinese Lutheran Church in 1998. He translated the Bethel Series from English to Chinese, then taught the Bethel Series as a missionary pastor in Communist China since 2005, mostly in secret. For 16 years, through his ministry, the Bethel Series has blessed more than 1,000 Chinese pastors and their churches. 🌈



THE
Bethel.
Series



ACTJAM BIG WATCH

The Black Church: This is Our Story, This Is Our Song

The ACTJAM Big Watch for February is *The Black Church: This is Our Story, This Is Our Song*, a documentary by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. available to view on the PBS Wisconsin web site here: <https://tinyurl.com/4rbmmt9s>.

It's a 400-year story of the Black Church's bedrock role at the nexus of race, religion and politics. As Oprah Winfrey remarks in the film, "I don't know how we could have survived as a people without it." The Black Church has taken people from the valley to "the mountaintop" and, as some of the most influential Black voices today reflect on the meaning of the church in their lives and to

the country, the series contemplates where the "promised land" is for this generation and the next.

As we learned in SETTLIN' – our January Big Read – the Black Church in Madison held the African Community together as it was taking root and growing. In 1900 there were only 19 African American households in Madison. Yet these families established a church. In 1902 they purchased Bethel Lutheran's building for \$150, located on the corner of Johnson, Hamilton and Butler Streets, and moved it to East Dayton Street in the heart of the new African American Community. St. Paul AME became the first

Black church in Madison, followed by Mt. Zion Baptist Church in 1911.

What was it about the Black Church – whether in Madison or nationally – that made it the center of the African American community and that makes it the center today? How did God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit give hope and strength to people who had suffered immeasurably at the hands of other Christians? What can we learn from this?

We'll watch a segment of *The Black Church* and discuss it Sunday, February 13 and 27 at 10:15am in Good Shepherd Chapel. 🌈



CLOTHING DONATIONS NEEDED

Bethel's Homeless Ministry has been very busy this winter providing homeless and impoverished guests with seasonal clothing items. We have been blessed with many donations from our congregation and the community however, we cannot seem to keep up with the demand for the following items:

- Men's jeans in all sizes but especially 30-36 waist jeans
- Men's T-shirts in all colors
- Men's flannel shirts and sweatshirts
- Men's and Women's thermal long underwear
- Men's and Woman's regular underwear
- Towels
- Backpacks and sleeping bags (we have ordered both but have a need for more).

We offer our thanks to all who provide items to the Clothing Room as there is a great and continuous need for providing warm clothing to sustain these folks who have such struggles. 🌈



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Madison, WI 53703

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