

Jesus loves you. Walk with him.

BETHELITE

FEBRUARY 16, 2022: VOL. 70, NO. 4

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BETHEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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COMING ALIVE WITH GOD'S WORD

In times of trial and trouble, many Americans turn to the Bible for encouragement. And with good reason, according to a new study. In the middle of a global pandemic, contentious politics, and social unrest, the American Bible Society, with assistance from Harvard University's Human Flourishing Program, found a strong correlation between scripture reading and hope. Frequent Bible readers rated themselves 33 points more hopeful than irregular scripture readers did in two surveys of more than 1,000 people done six months apart. The study also found that people are more hopeful when they read scripture more frequently. On a scale of 1 to 100, with 100 being the most hopeful, Americans who report reading the Bible three or four times per year scored 42; people who read monthly scored 59; weekly, 66; and multiple times per week, 75. Bible reading—along with other forms of community and discipleship, such as going to church or participating in a small group—appear to contribute to people's sense of well-being and happiness, said Tyler VanderWeele,



Your word is a lamp unto my feet.
—Psalm 119:05

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Pastor Mike

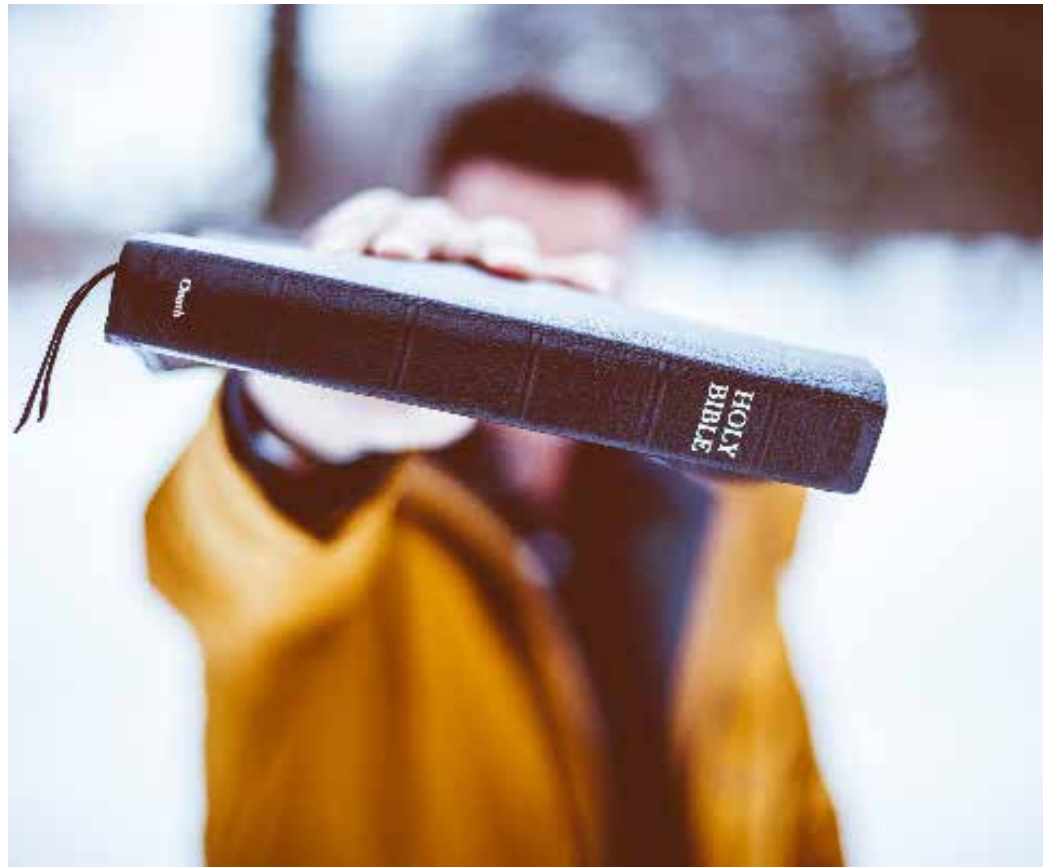
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director of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University.

“The churches have an important and profound role in contributing to people’s well-being in general—and especially so during this time,” he said.

It doesn’t take a global pandemic or a Harvard study to tell us what we already know at Bethel, that the Bible gives great encouragement and strength in hard times. In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul writes “For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures” (Romans 15:4). Reading and studying the Bible are at the heart of the life of a Christian. And what a great experience it is! Martin Luther certainly thought so! When he opened the Bible, Luther had a



Read. Mark. Learn. And inwardly digest.

real and powerful encounter with the Spirit of the Living Lord: “The Bible is alive; it speaks to me. It has feet; it runs after me. It has hands; it lays hold of me!” Luther discovered that reading and studying the Bible did far more than he ever expected. In addition to the hope and encouragement from scripture, what else do we get?

Wisdom is gained from God’s Word. The Proverbs especially talk about the importance of seeking after wisdom, God’s wisdom.

We learn who God is. The Bible isn’t so much about us and how we can apply it to our life. It is about God, God’s character, God’s story, and how we are included in God’s creation of the future.

We learn God’s plan of salvation. Did you know that the whole Bible points to God’s plan of salvation in Jesus? Everything in the Old

Testament points to or leads to God’s ultimate revelation in Jesus. The New Testament is pointing back to what Jesus’ death and resurrection mean for us.

We get a strong sense of self. We become firm in our faith when we know what we actually believe and why we believe it.

Develop a new love for the scriptures.

We get a renewal in our minds. As we fill our minds with God’s story, we have less desire for the cultural junk and negativity of our world.

Learn to imitate God. As we grow in our relationship with God, we are transformed to become more like God . . . from the inside out! I encourage all of us to make a renewed commitment to reading and studying the Bible. Lent provides us many great opportunities to do just that. 🌈



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

March 2
12:00 Noon
7pm

Time to get your ash on!

Each year, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection. Catholic, Orthodox, and many (but not all) Protestants appreciate and observe Lent. Though Lent is not named or observed in the Bible, the path of Lent—prayer, fasting, and generosity over a period of time—is heavily emphasized by the authors of and characters in the Bible, including Jesus. The Bible commands a lifestyle of worship and devotion that looks considerably like Lent. Therefore, while the word is absent in the Bible, the reality of Lent is woven throughout the whole of Scripture. 🌈



MARCH 6—APRIL 3

In Jesus' day, meals were about more than just the bread, olives, grapes, figs, and occasional fish. They were a way to make a statement and to send a message. For most meals, the point being made centered on what did it mean to be a child of God, or more to the point — a Jew. Meals established identity both socially and religiously. In Jesus' world, Jews used meals to reinforce the belief that they were separate from all others and special in God's eyes.



This was the point of both the content of the meal and the manner in which it was served. The meal drove home the message that there are people who are insiders and people who are outsiders to God's care and love. In many ways, the meal was the center of Jewish identity. It is not surprising then, that the table became the place where Jesus delivered some of God's most direct, and for many Jews, stomach-

turning revelations. Through the dozen or more meals that Jesus shares with others in Luke, Jesus shares the revelation that God welcomes the very people that Jewish teachers had cast out. These include those who have been stigmatized by mainstream religion. Jesus brings God's divine hospitality in the form of meals that are marked by joy, generosity, forgiveness, inclusivity, the rejection of status, and most importantly — the experience of Jesus' presence. Jesus reveals a God who is the divine host who nourishes and welcomes all the people.

This five-week series, from the Gospel of Luke, Pastor Mike will examine stories of Jesus having a meal. Along the way, we will seek to learn more about the person of Jesus, his mission, and what his dining habits mean for our everyday faith. 🌈

SMALL GROUP LUKE STUDY



During the season of Lent, which begins the first week of March, Bethel embarks on a new Bible study on the Gospel of Luke. Like the popular study from last year, this study takes a layered approach to understanding the Bible. After opening with prayer and a fun ice-breaker, each session looks at a passage from four different perspectives as though looking through different lens. The four lens are literary, historical, Lutheran, and devotional. As the scripture is read from these four vantage points, people in the small group contribute their own point of view as a group and as individuals. All these perspectives together help bring greater detail and meaning from the Bible.

This study will be available to use in small group or personal study time. If you already have a small group that you belong to, please consider using this Luke study. If you do not yet have a small group, we will help you find one. They will meet in person and online. 🌈



BIBLE STUDY

Two Opportunities Each Week Childcare Provided

Beginning on March 9 (Wednesday) and March 12 (Saturday), the week after Ash Wednesday Pastor Mike will be offering a new twelve-week Bethel Bible Immersion class on the New Testament. Classes will be at 10:30am. Bethel Bible Immersion classes take a deep dive into the study of the Bible. Relying on the latest findings in archaeology and scholarly research, Bible Study Immersion: New Testament will clear away centuries of fog to give you a fresh and exciting look at the New Testament. Aided by assigned readings, some homework, maps, and group discussions students of the Bible will develop a new love for the scriptures and find new ways to hear God speak.

Bible Study Immersion: New Testament will last twelve weeks and will be organized with the following outline:

1. Ancient Jewish Background
2. Greco-Roman Context
3. Mark—Jesus the Suffering Son of God
4. Matthew—Jesus the Jewish Messiah
5. Luke—Jesus the Savior of the World
6. John—Jesus the Man from Heaven
7. The Acts of the Apostles
8. Paul—Man, Mission, and Method
9. Paul and the Crises of His Churches
10. Paul's Major Letters
11. The Pastoral Epistles
12. The Book of Revelation



People who have taken the Bethel Bible Series classes find Bible Study Immersion to be a good next step.

Registration is required in order to help Bethel order the proper number of books and materials. To register, visit www.bethel-madison.org/immersion 🌈

STUDY IMMERSION

NEW TESTAMENT



What Bible Translation Should I Choose?

Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic languages have different complexities compared to the English language. For example, there are often multiple English words for just one word in Greek. So when a person is translating the Greek biblical text from the original manuscripts into English, there may be many words to choose from to communicate the author's intended message. Bible translations fall somewhere on a continuum between a literal or readable translation.

The Literal/Formal translations attempt to keep the form and meaning of the original language in words, grammar and structure as close as possible to the author's original intent. Because of this, the most literal



translations can be harder to read and understand but are often more useful for in-depth study since it is as close to the original language as you can get. The most excellent example of a literal translation is the New Revised Standard Version. This is often the first choice for mainline churches like Bethel.

The Readable/Dynamic translations attempt to express the original meaning of the Biblical manuscripts in contemporary English. They use language and idioms that would be understood by modern readers.

Examples of this translation style include the Good News Bible, the NIV and the New Living Bible translations.

The Paraphrased translations focus more on translating thought-for-thought behind the text instead of word-for-word. This means there is less emphasis on using the actual words of the Hebrew and Greek. The best example of a paraphrase is The Message.

The best possible scenario is to have several translations to refer to always being sure to have a copy of the NRSV nearby. Having more than one translation at hand helps shed light on the nuances of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. 🌈



RACHEL KENNEY-BROWN RESIGNS TO BE FULL-TIME MOM

Dear beloved Bethel family,

As you may know, I am pregnant and expecting a baby in April! As I've grown in my pregnancy, I've also grown into a new understanding of my next call: to be a full-time mom. I will step down from my position on April 1st.

Though I will no longer serve as your Youth Director, I will serve you and Bethel as you serve one another—as a sibling in Christ, who lives and breathes the work of the church as a member of this community. I grieve the loss of my role at Bethel as a staff person, but I look forward to our life together in this new way—we'll room alongside each other at Bethel Horizons for retreats, worship together in the sanctuary, work together at church events, and as you hold my child as I've held yours. 🌈

BETHEL'S YOUTH MINISTRY PRESENTS DECONSTRUCTION

New Series of Workshops for Young
Adults and High Schoolers
Mar 6, 13, 20, & 27; 5-7pm; Bethel

In her book, *The Soul of Shame*, Brene Brown says “we have to retell the stories we believe about ourselves,” as well as those stories that raised us. As a church, what stories do we tell ourselves, about ourselves, need to be retold? Which stories need to be examined, deconstructed, and called into question

so that we may have a “living faith”? Engaging with our stories in this way is called deconstruction and invites us into a life of questioning the practical application — or misapplication — of the Gospel. It is where we

engage with our doubt, and examine and challenge the traditions and culture of the church. It is work that is not to be feared, because over 500 years ago, it was Martin Luther's examination of the stories that the church believed about itself that brought us the Reformation.

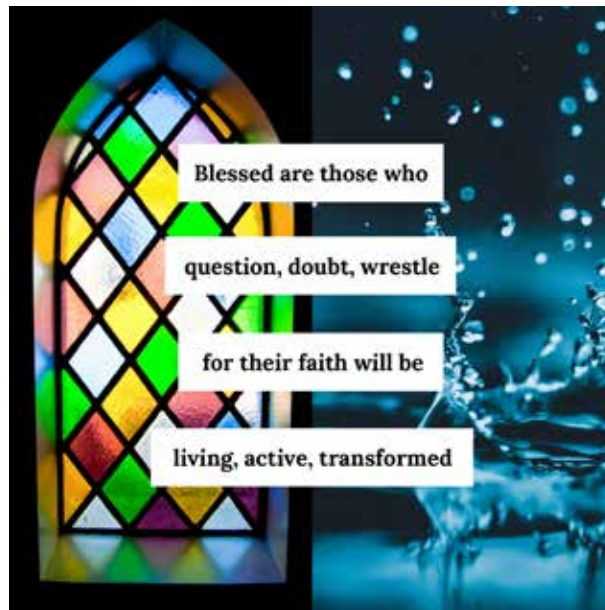
We are in the middle of the Next Reformation, a reformation that will be defined, not by another Martin Luther, but by all of us. Call it spiritual but not religious. Call it fed up with the old ways and the old days. Whatever you call it, the youth of today, and of our congregation, are on the pulse. They

are doubting, questioning, and examining who we believe ourselves to be as a church.

Bethel's Youth Ministry is inviting high school students and young adults under 21 to upheave, dismantle, and retell the stories we have come to believe about ourselves as

a church in a series of four workshops in March titled, “Deconstruction.” Come to be enlightened, to enlighten, to grow in your faith and nurture new spiritual practices.

Email rachel@bethel-madison.org to sign-up.





IT'S FEBRUARY, THE SEASON(ING) OF LOVE!

The Food Pantry is having a spice drive during the month of February! Please help us show our care for the cooks who use our Pantry. Our food is sourced primarily from Second Harvest Foodbank, but they do not carry spices to help our guests make flavorful meals for their families. We would appreciate donations of the following spices:

Chili Powder, Cinnamon, Cumin, Garlic Powder, Italian Seasoning, Onion Powder, Poultry Seasoning, Salt, and Salt Substitute



We have limited display space, so are hoping to stick to the above list. If it isn't convenient for you to shop, we would also welcome monetary gifts so we can go out and purchase any spices we are short on from the list. Since there are 28 days in February, we would love to collect 28 of each of our Season(ing)s!

any spices we are short on from the list. Since there are 28 days in February, we would love to collect 28 of each of our Season(ing)s!

Contact Jeanne Gill, jeannekgill@gmail.com, or 608.335.8830; or

Cheryl Frazier, cheryl.frazier73@gmail.com, or 608.206.4539, if you have any questions. Thank you! 🌈

CARING FOR CREATION A Madison Treasure: The Lakeshore Nature Preserve

March 8 at 7:30pm via Zoom

The beauty of the UW-Madison campus is renowned worldwide. The Lakeshore Nature Preserve represents one of its jewels. Dr. Gisela Kutzbach will discuss this success story of environmental conservation and community commitment.

REGISTER HERE:

<https://tinyurl.com/mru6tb2v> 🌈



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Easter Giving 2022

ONLINE FORM:

www.bethel-madison.org/eastergiving

Please write **separate checks** for the Easter Garden & Hephatha Strong Baby Sanctuary. The **Deadline is Monday, April 4**, 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 April 17 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



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BethelLutheranTV

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

