



Jesus loves you. Walk with him.

BETHELITE

JULY 6, 2022: VOL 71, NO 12

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BETHEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE ABORTION ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

The oft-used phrase, “the road less travelled,” is a line from the Robert Frost poem *The Road Not Taken* (1920). Over time, the line has become something of a catch-all phrase to describe an unconventional or uninvestigated path. When it comes to the debate over abortion in our country, we can say with real confidence that the position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is, indeed, the “road less travelled.” What makes the ELCA position that road less travelled is the way it balances the life of the “in the womb” with the life of the mother. The vast majority of views on the morality and legality of abortion take one of two directions. One direction insists on the absolute right of the life in the womb to live; the other, the absolute right of the mother to choose. For many, the issue is absolutely black and white, one or the other, simple and straight forward. The ELCA path avoids the trap of competing absolutes by stating: “A developing life in the womb does not have an absolute right to be born, nor does a pregnant woman have an absolute right to terminate a pregnancy. The concern for both the life of the woman and the developing life in her womb expresses a common commitment to life. This requires that we move beyond the usual ‘pro-life’ versus ‘pro-choice’ language in discussing abortion.” In short, neither the life in the womb nor the life of the mother have an absolute right.



Rev. Elizabeth Eaton is the presiding bishop of the ELCA

This should seem obvious since two absolutes cannot be held to be true if they are in

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conflict with each other. If the “life in the womb” has an absolute right to life, then the mother does not. If the mother has an absolute right, then the “life in the womb” does not. They cannot both be absolutely right simultaneously. At some point, one must override the other. For example, I have a friend whose pregnant wife developed a condition that would mean she would certainly bleed to death during birth. The parents faced a choice, the life of the mother or of the life in the womb. The couple had other children and chose to terminate the pregnancy rather than deprive the other children of their mother. It was a painful and wrenching decision for them. The ELCA view takes into account situations like these and accepts that there are legitimate and morally justifiable reasons for a woman to terminate her pregnancy. Of course, not all reasons are morally defensible. But where the life of the mother or of the “life in the womb” are at risk, ending the pregnancy can be the moral course. Other reasons that can be considered



Neither left nor right but right up the middle

moral justifications for terminating a pregnancy include rape and incest. I have known two women who were impregnated by their fathers, uncles, or brothers. One carried the life to full term; the other did not. I have known women who became pregnant as the result of a rape. They all ended those pregnancies. The ELCA recognizes that there are morally defensible reasons to end a pregnancy. Even though abortion may be wrong, it can be the least wrong option. In this way, it is like divorce or war. Both could be said to be “wrong.” Given a certain set of circumstances, it could also be morally justifiable and the least wrong option of all the options.

The ELCA statement goes on to say: “Because we believe that God is the creator of life, the number of induced abortions is a source of deep concern to this church. We mourn the loss of life that God has created. The strong Christian presumption is to preserve and protect life. Abortion ought to be an option only of last resort. Therefore, as a church we seek to reduce the need to turn to abortion as the answer to unintended pregnancies...Because of our conviction that both the life of the woman and the life in her womb must be respected by law, this church opposes: the total lack of regulation

of abortion; legislation that would outlaw abortion in all circumstances; laws that prevent access to information about all options available to women faced with unintended pregnancies; laws that deny access to safe and affordable services for morally justifiable abortions; mandatory or coerced abortion or sterilization; laws that prevent couples from practicing contraception; laws that are primarily intended to harass those contemplating or deciding for an abortion.”

The ELCA position refers to the “life in the womb” instead of “child” because it recognizes the complexity of defining human life *in utero*. Both the egg and the sperm individually are *alive*. When joined together as a zygote, they are *alive*. But is a zygote, that single cell packaged with the DNA for development a “person” yet? At what point do the multiplying cells become a “person”? When there is a heart? Arms? Legs? Brain? Different religions offer different answers. The ELCA view is more aligned with modern science that recognizes personhood as something that unfolds not in a single moment but in a series of moments. In a world of sound-bites, slogans, and black and white absolutes, the ELCA view is the “road less travelled.” 🌈

What
makes
us
human?



*"Look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
-- Oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!"*

For a novel dose of good clean fun, we will celebrate Christmas in July in worship on Sunday, July 10. We know, of course, that the gift of Christ's birth and incarnation dwells in us always. And Emmanuel - God with us - is a miraculous reality new every morning.

Christmas has a ubiquitous influence that echoes throughout secular culture. Why is Christmas celebrated some way or another so universally, by religious and non-religious folks alike? A cynic's view may point to opportunistic capitalism, consumerism, and other hallmarks of human systems and inner nature. A faithful eye, however, sees the reality that all of creation consciously or unconsciously resonates with the knowledge of its own incarnational divinity. Somehow, we know Christmas is about all of us and is for all of us. And the hope, radiance, and tenderness that the story of Christmas promises is something universally hungered for. We need



love.

But, why July?? Well...the season of Christmas in the liturgical calendar is but 12 days long, often only two Sundays. Yet the sacred music of the Christmas season is some of the most beloved and familiar of all the church's hymnody. Christmas falls in seasonal winter when there is less sunlight, temperatures are cold, and many struggle with depression and grief; in this regard, the warmth and cheer inherent in the good

news of Jesus' birth is a literal Godsend. Summer splendor, too, is a Godsend, and warmth and cheer unfold effortlessly from God's creation in these summer days. So, let's celebrate!

We will worship God and remember the wonders of Christmas on July 10. 🌈



ZACH WANTS YOU IN THE DROP-IN CHOIR

Join Zach on Sunday morning, July 10 at 8:15am in Good Shepherd Chapel for the first of several Drop-In Choir opportunities this summer! No previous experience in singing or affiliation with Bethel Choir necessary - all are welcome, all ages! We will warm up and learn a very simple piece of music to sing as the offering piece at the 9am service. July 10 is "Christmas in July" for worship, so the piece will be Christmas themed! Singers can sit wherever they'd like during church and come up to sing together during the sharing of the peace and then return to their seats. No robes, no balcony. If you have any questions, let Zach know! 🌈
zach@bethel-madison.org



DO YOU SEE ME?



Studies show again and again that visitors to a church normally make up their minds whether they will return or not within minutes of stepping onto the church property. This means that before they hear the note of music in worship or the sermon, they have already made up their mind whether or not to return. The six most important minutes of a church service, in a visitor's eyes, are the three minutes before the service and the three minutes after the service. This is when church members break are enjoying "fellowship." The visitor has their antennas up looking for the signals that indicate if the people welcome them or not. When members huddle with their closest friends and fail to reach out to newcomers, it is a dead give away that there is "no room in the inn." That means there is no place for the visitor. When visitors find a church that focuses on welcoming strangers, they are much more likely to return, even if there was a sour note or a weak sermon. People visit a new church first to find community, to be accepted, and to be acknowledged. 🌈



WELC

COMMUNITY TEAM HAS ITS EYE ON YOU!

"Welcome one another . . . just as Christ has welcomed you " —Romans 15:7

The Community Ministry Team is excited about Bethel and creating the most welcoming place possible. That's why it has its eye on you. As the calendar moves through the summer months, the team is on a recruitment drive. There are entrances all around the church but there is only a need for greeters at three of those. The Community Team is looking for people (adults, families, children) who want to see Bethel thrive and be a place of wonderful welcome. The requirements are pretty simple and straightforward.

5. **Greet people** before, during, and after the service, making it a point to look for people who seem a little out of place, unsure of themselves, or appear a little uncomfortable.
6. **Do your best** flight attendant impersonation, pointing-out and directing people to the nursery, restrooms, coffee, and worship when necessary.
7. **Invite for coffee and donuts**, because its coffee and donuts.
8. **Offer extra care** when needed as for the elderly, those with young children, or someone caring something approaches.



1. **Be glad** to see people come in the door.
2. **Say "hello"** with some enthusiasm.
3. **Make eye contact** and smile so that they feel noticed.
4. **Extend a hand** in welcome as a way to say "This is a friendly space."
9. **Say "hi"** to children, since they might be more nervous than their parents who are attending a new place.
10. **Invite guests** to take a guest bag. 🌈



Community Ministry Team: Jeanne, Katie, Betty, Sue, Faith and John on the computer screen

JOIN HERE



To help Bethel build the most welcoming team of greeters possible, please contact Faith Kelley by email at fkelly7@yahoo.com Or by phone at (608) 279-8221 🌈

A QUICK AND EASY WAY To Roll-Out the Red Carpet

Let's face it. We are not always in the right frame of mind to greet a guest before or after worship. Some weekends you just wake up on the wrong side of the bed. Or, just as likely, you are dealing with some burden. One of the easiest ways to roll-out the red carpet for guests is for regular attenders to sit in the middle of the pews at church. When a guest has to crawl or step over people in the pew in order to get to a seat, their

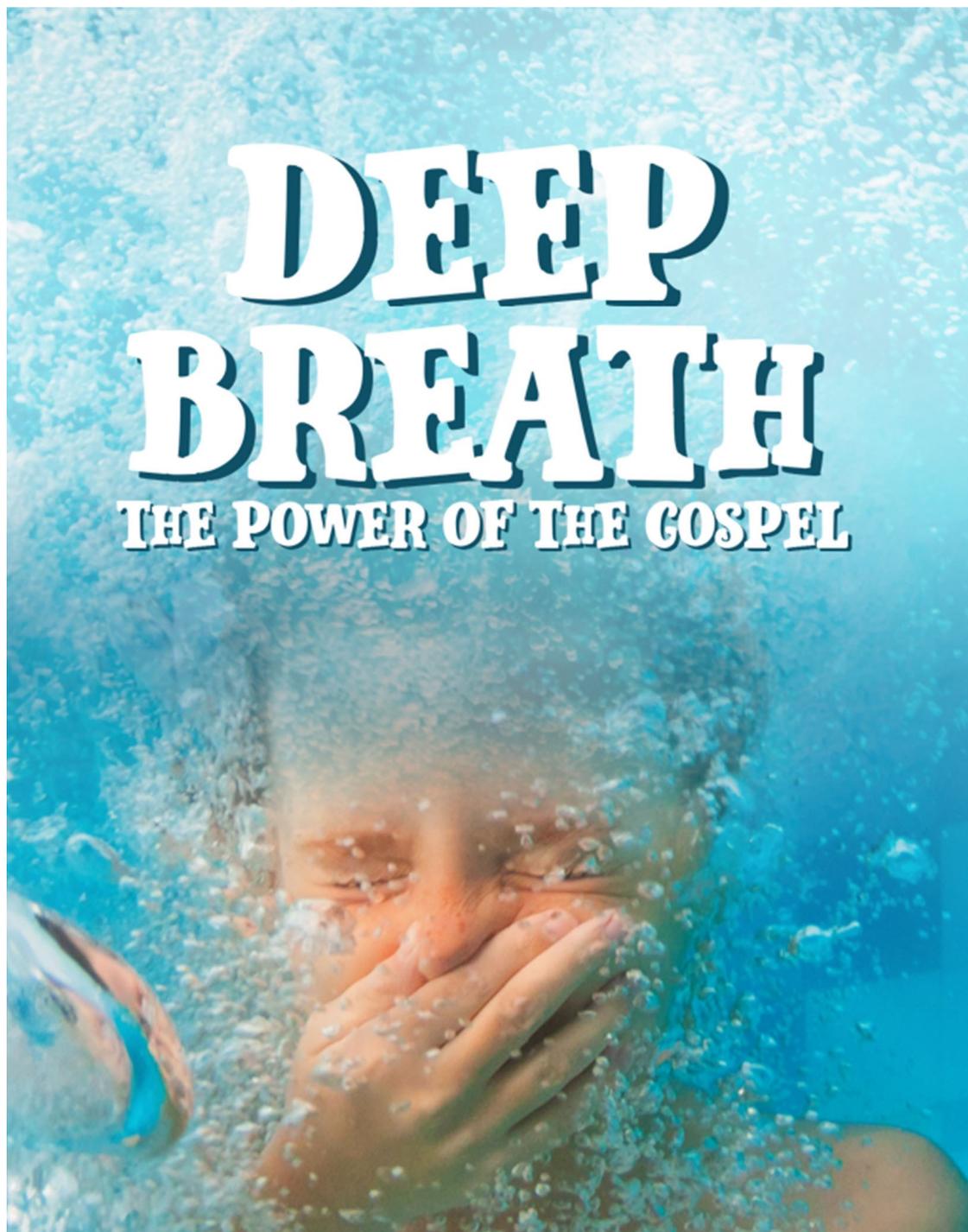
discomfort level shoots up through the bell tower. Instead of taking the best seats in the house for ourselves, let's make it easy for others to find a place. This small step may feel unnatural at first, but it also provides a regular opportunity to welcome others as Christ welcomed us — by making room for the stranger. It is a chance to serve and remember that every Sunday is someone's first Sunday. 🌈



TAKE THE PLUNGE: New Member

Life is so much better when you are immersed in a community that cares for you, nurtures your spiritual growth, and equips you to change your world. Bethel is that kind of place. For all considering looking for a spiritual home, looking for a short class to dip your toes in the water, or for those considering making Bethel their spiritual home, Pastor Mike is offering a class to do just that.

Taking place on Sundays at 5:30 PM, July 17, 24, and 31 at Bethel, To sign-up, email Pastor Mike at pastormikebrown@bethel-madison.org 



JULY SERMON SERIES

Summer is a time for pools, gardens, and growth. This three-week series explains the gospel's power to saturate us with strength, hope, and contentment. Join us in July for this sermon series.

July 16/17: The Awesome Power in Focus (Pastor Mike)

July 23/24: The Amazing Power of Faith (Heather Moen)

July 30/31: The Astounding Power of Endurance (Pastor Mike) 

OLDER, WISER, LIVELY, SOLOS: Group for Singles

Do you want to have a hoot? Come to OWLS (Older, Wiser, Lively Solos) the third Wednesday of each month. OWLS meet to explore the Madison restaurant scene, to connect to old friends and to make new friends. No membership is required. Just bring yourself if you want to eat in the company of others. It's ok to bring a friend from outside Bethel too! Each person pays for their own meals. It is a wonderful time to reminisce, tell stories and eat at different places. Some recent experiences have included Nonne's, Buck and Honey's, The Vintage, Quiveys and The Great Dane. Because Concert on the Square is a Wednesday in July, the next gathering will be Tuesday, July 19 from 5 to 7 at Blackhawk Country Club. Following that, the group resumes on the third Wednesday, August 17.

To participate in OlderWiserLivelySolos just email Nancy Wiebe (nawiebe57@gmail.com) to join the reminder list and rsvp when you can come. Prepare to laugh! 🌈

July 19 from 5 to 7 at Blackhawk Country Club



The XYZ (eXtra Years of Zest) group is an interdenominational group started and based at Bethel that serves men and women who have reached their 55th birthday. It is now 40 years strong. The mission of XYZ is to strengthen our mutual faith in Jesus Christ and the bonds of friendship through fellowship and service. XYZ believes that life is a gift from God and that aging is a natural part of living and welcomes new members to join at any time.

July meetings of XYZ will be on the 8th and 22nd starting at 9:00 am in Borgwardt Hall at Bethel.

Please save the date for an XYZ outing:

Saturday, August 27th,
Wisconsin Brat Cruise on the
Milwaukee river
Cost about \$33.00 🌈



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BETHEL NIGHT AT THE MALLARDS

To the Duck Pond!
Tuesday, July 26
6:35 PM

Let's sing it! "Take me out to the ball park! Take me out to the game!" Summertime means many great outdoor festivities. And we have a great one with Mallards baseball.

Join with others from Bethel for a fun-filled night. For more details and to RSVP, please contact beau.goff@raymondjames.com.

Batter up!



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

