



BETHELITE

JANUARY 1, 2024: VOL 73, NO. 1

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IT'S OLD, IT'S NEW

Can you guess what it is? The Bible of course! In the flurry of resolutions for health and career, let's not overlook our spiritual well-being. As we step into the New Year, let's carve out moments for introspection. Let's reflect on the contours of our faith journey in the past year—the moments that illuminated our path and those that tested our resolve. This introspection isn't to dwell on shortcomings but to pave the way for meaningful resolutions rooted in our Lutheran beliefs. When did you feel closer to God? Was there a time that you felt devoid of love for God? Do you practice spiritual goals? Have you reached out to someone new or lost? How often do you participate in church or have discussions with other congregants about faith?

How do we set spiritual resolutions? It's not merely about grand gestures but the small, consistent steps that shape our spiritual landscape. It might be committing to a regular time of prayer or studying Scripture, seeking to understand our Lutheran heritage more deeply, or engaging more intentionally in acts of service and compassion. Let this transitional time inspire you to make changes, set goals, join a new group, or study the Bible more. We have a great class series starting this month: The Bethel Bible Series.

This series won't merely be about studying ancient texts but about unraveling timeless truths that speak directly to our aspirations for the New Year. As we stand at the threshold of the New Year,



It is never too late to make changes

let's do so not with trepidation but with a firm resolve to deepen our spiritual roots. Let's support each other, share our aspirations, and walk hand in hand as a community committed to nurturing our faith.

Together, let's embrace this opportunity for renewal and approach the New Year with hearts open to the wonders that God has in store for us.

Bethel Bible Series Old Testament classes begin on January 6th and 7th with two options: the Saturday class meets weekly from 8:30 to 9:30 am via Zoom. The Sunday class meets weekly from 7:45 to 9:00 am in person in room 120 at Bethel through June 8th and 9th, 2024. New Testament classes will start in mid-June at the same times.

Using the Bible as the textbook, we learn how everything in the Bible is connected, from Genesis to Revelation. It helps us to understand the Bible in relationship to the culture and history of the times it was written. It brings us closer to the One who has blessed us. We invite you to join us. Sign up sheets are available at the Welcome Desk. For more information or to sign up, contact Dave Myhre at dave@bethelbibleseries.org.

UPCOMING PASTOR COVERAGE

January 6/7 - Pastor Katya Ouchakof

January 13/14 - Pastor Katya Ouchakof

January 20/21 - Pastor Jeff Quinto

January 27/28 - Pastor Jeff Quinto



PSALMS SERIES ART EXHIBIT BY BOBBETTE ROSE January 3 - February 29

Visio Divina Art Workshop, February 3rd, 2 - 4pm

Meet the Artist, February 4th, 10am

The wonderful abstract Psalms Series artwork by local artist Bobbette Rose is based on the Psalms, a compilation of prayers and laments found in the Bible. Each image is created as a meditation on (not an illustration of) an individual psalm on a 12" x 12" x 2" wood tile that has been covered with hand-made cast paper painted on in a variety of methods, including egg tempera and encaustic (wax).

Come and join Bobbette at Bethel for a 2-hour Visio Divina Art Workshop on the afternoon of February 3rd, from 2-4 pm. Together we will meditate and create images around a Psalm. No art experience is necessary. There is a \$10 supply fee. Please let Kenny know you would like to attend recep@bethel-madison.org. Please RSVP by January 28th. It will be followed by an Art Forum on Sunday morning, February 4th. 🌈

NEW DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

We are pleased to announce that we have hired a new Director of Music who will be starting with us on late January, early February. This individual will bring experience in organ performance and choir directing. We will make an announcement of their name and more details after the first of the year as this individual

has a full-time commitment through Advent. Please join us in thanking the search committee for their time and effort in finding a talented individual to fill this role. We look forward to sharing more information as the time comes.

- Bethel Lutheran Church Joint Council 🌈



HEPHATHA

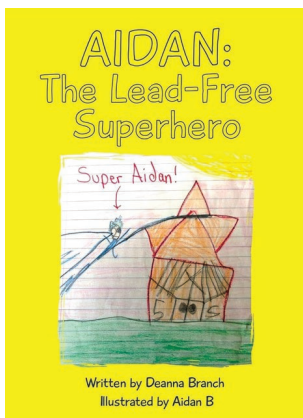
Hephatha Lutheran Church at North 18th and West Locust streets in Milwaukee has been Bethel's mission partner for so long we've lost track! To kick off our 2024 Sunday Forums on January 7, it's fitting we celebrate our relationship with this remarkable congregation that's become the cornerstone of the community.

Hephatha nurse Chris Keim and congregational leader Deanna Branch will be at Bethel on January 7 @ 10:30 to talk about two of Hephatha's most influential community programs - Strong Baby Sanctuary and COLE, the Coalition on Lead Emergency.

In 2021, 6.25% of children in Milwaukee County under the age of 6 had elevated levels of lead in their blood with high levels in Hephatha's zip code.

Deanna's two sons were impacted, one severely, due to unsafe housing. With no place to live, Deanna turned her outrage into advocacy. She was asked to tell her story to Vice President Harris, presented at a summit at the White House, and attended the State of the Union address in 2023 as the Vice President's guest. In 2022, Deanna published a children's book *Aidan: The Lead-Free Super Hero*, that Aidan

illustrated, to raise awareness of the issue. Aidan, along with his brother and baby sister, will also join us on January 7 and be happy to autograph copies of the book that we'll be selling. Strong Baby Sanctuary is a partnership between a Milwaukee hospital and churches like Hephatha to raise healthy babies and reduce infant mortality. Nurse Chris Keim says "It doesn't matter what the socio-economic level is. If you're Black, you have a higher possibility of having a premature baby which is the number one reason why a baby dies." Black babies in Wisconsin continue to be three times more likely to die before their first birthdays than white babies. Strong Baby Sanctuary makes a difference by supporting moms in the community with networking, education, and baby care items.



"Saving our Babies" will continue as the theme of our Sunday Forum on January 14, turning our attention closer to home. Micaela Berry-Smith from the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness in Madison will share solutions to lower the incidence of low birth weight babies born to Black mothers in Dane County. A Call to Justice and Mercy (ACTJAM) Sunday Forums are held from 10:30-11:30 a.m. in Good Shepherd Chapel. 🌈



ADD THAT "TOUCH OF SPECIAL" TO OUR SANCTUARY

If you have a special event or anniversary upcoming, please consider including Bethel's congregation in your celebration by underwriting altar flowers for our Sunday worship. Your sponsorship of the worship flowers will be included in our bulletin and seen during the telecast of our services. These can be taken home with you following the 9am service (due to the use of the screen in the Sanctuary for the 11am service) so you will have a lovely reminder of your celebration along with providing this for Bethel. Felly's is our provider of these arrangements and the cost for each is \$40, however if you reserve a date you may opt for an arrangement or florist that differs. To ensure we have time to make the appropriate arrangements please provide all payments to Bethel the Wednesday prior to your targeted date for underwriting flowers. For those who would like to sponsor flowers for an upcoming Sunday, or would like more information, please speak with Kenny at the reception desk or give Bethel a call at (608)-257-3577. Thank you for considering this opportunity! 🌈

ANNUAL MEETING

January 28th, 2024 at 12pm

It's that time of year again! The Annual Meeting is January 28th at 12pm in the Fireside Room with a brunch to follow in Borgwardt Hall. The meeting will be available on Zoom if you cannot attend in person. In accordance to our constitution, we need 100 attendees to constitute a quorum. 🌈

FRIENDSHIP CLUB UPDATE

Friendship Club will be on hiatus for January, 2024, as we wait for information about the church's plans on who/how to prepare meals for organizations and meals that the Church sponsors. Please stay tuned! Thank you. - Judi Griffin 🌈

CALLING ALL MOMS!

If you are interested in joining or leading a Christian based Mom's support group that meets twice per month on Sundays from 9:00-10:30 OR Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30 with nursery care provided from our professional nursery staff OR if you are a Mom willing to join or lead the group to mentor newer Moms of young kids, please contact Paula, Director of Kids & Family Ministry, at paula@bethel-madison.org. We are looking to have the group(s) start in late January or early February. Modifiable curriculum from MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) will be paid for by Bethel Family Ministry. See mops.org for more information. Your kids can be older than preschoolers to join. We just need 2 or 3 moms per group to get started so sign up today! 🌈

FEBRUARY VESPERS SERVICE

February 14th from 6 - 6:30pm

Please join us at Bethel for a monthly youth-led Wednesday Night Vespers Service. Members from the Youth Group will help plan and lead the service. It will be a thoughtful, meaningful, and contemplative service. From Heather Rainwater Moen, "My prayer is that this monthly offering will nour-

ish, reassure, and renew our congregation."

Families need to register their child(ren) for child care for any event prior to dropping their child off for care. If you registered for Sunday morning, you do not need to register again. 🌈

LENT PREVIEW

Many of us remember Lent at Bethel when the congregation journeyed together to the foot of the cross. We studied the same book of the Bible, read the same daily devotion, and joined hands to serve others. During Lent 2024 we'll again be making this journey together as our 40 DAYS OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL starting February 14, Ash Wednesday.

The Lent Team (Kathy Kube, Ann Leon, Heather Moen, Jacqui Shanda) chose the book of Acts for our study because it tells the story of the Holy Spirit guiding the church. It feels appropriate for where we are today, feeling called by the Spirit to step up in both familiar and new ways — not unlike the first Christians.

Everyone can participate — individually or in a small or large group. Our study guide is ACTS: CATCHING UP WITH THE SPIRIT written by Matthew Skinner, a professor at Luther Seminary. We'll sell copies of the book for a suggested donation of \$10 starting Sunday, February 4.

Existing small groups like women's circles are encouraged to take up the weekly study. Or, form your own small group! We'll also offer opportunities to join a once-a-week large group study -- on Zoom, in person or asynchronously

using the Marco Polo app. Starting February 19, Mary Brennan will lead the Zoom study on Mondays at noon and Heather Moen will lead the in-person study on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at Bethel.

The Lent journey is marked by a daily and weekly rhythm — daily devotion and prayer and weekly worship and Bible study. In prior years we referred to this cadence as 2+2+1 — two daily practices plus two weekly plus one service project. For the daily practice, thirty-six Bethel members have offered to write a devotion based on verses from Acts. We're also working with other ministry teams to plan a service project.

There will be training for small group study leaders and a leader guide. Small group leaders can email Adulthood@Bethel-madison.org or contact any member of the Lent Team for more information.

Lent 2024 is a project of Bethel's Lifelong Learning Team. 🌈



ENERGY, CLIMATE, THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT, AND YOU

January 21 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room

Question: What's the Inflation Reduction Act?

Hint: The name won't help you guess the answer.

Answer: The IRA is the U.S. government's single largest step to address climate change, with the potential to spend \$700 billion over 10 years to help companies, non-profits, governments, and consumers adopt clean energy solutions, address environmental justice, and support resilient communities. Yet, a year after its passage, 7 in 10 Americans know little or nothing about the IRA.

Join Bethel's Caring for Creation group at 10:30 on January 21 as two invited speakers help us unravel the complexities and scope of the IRA's energy and climate investments; see what programs are available to Wisconsin residents, businesses, and churches; and learn what innovative steps local communities are taking.

Our guides will be Kathy Kuntz and Scott Williams. Kathy, the Director of the Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change, brings almost 30 years of experience helping businesses and residents adopt sustainable practices. As the Wisconsin Energy Institute's Research and Education Coordinator, Scott has led student and public energy-education efforts at UW-Madison for over a decade, and he's a very active C4C member at Bethel.

The IRA is an unprecedented opportunity to transition Wisconsin and the rest of the country to a cleaner, more sustainable economy. But its success rides on all of us taking action across multiple fronts, from energy efficiency and renewable energy to clean transportation and manufacturing. Building awareness of the IRA's available incentives—the goal of this forum—is the first step in that process. 🌱



BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS

February 3, at 9am

Bethel Horizons is again hosting "Breakfast with the Birds" Saturday, February 3, 2024. Relax in the Nature Center classroom as we identify birds coming to the feeders and relate bird feeding information, stories, and area sightings. Bring binoculars if you have them and bird-feeding stories to share! Please register soon at shorturl.at/bszS2, as space is limited. We look forward to spending a wonderful morning with you. 🌈

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

The work that volunteers do is very important. Selflessly giving your time to benefit your community and the people around you is one of the most generous deeds you can do. Volunteering at any time of the year is good, but volunteers during the Holidays are especially important. This season can be hectic, sad, joyful, and relaxing - that being said, for volunteers to show up despite any challenges are a Godsend. To the dedicated volunteers at Bethel Lutheran Church year round and during the Holidays, a most heartfelt thank you. We appreciate you and your time. Happy New Year!! 🌈



BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

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LOOKING AHEAD

January 21

Financial Review - 10:30am

January 28

Annual Meeting - 12:00pm

February 2 - 4

Confirmation Retreat

February 14

Ash Wednesday

Youth Vespers Service - 6:00pm

March 24

Palm Sunday

April 5 - 7

Spring at Horizons



NOVEMBER 2023 YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance
REVENUES			
Offerings	1,261,363	1,472,808	(211,445)
Miscellaneous revenue	190,501	214,588	(24,087)
Non-operating revenue	11,604	(688)	12,292
Total Revenue	1,463,468	1,686,709	(223,241)
MINISTRY INVESTMENTS			
Staff	1,074,303	1,264,106	(189,803)
Ministry & Resource Teams	340,002	315,752	24,250
Benevolence	27,608	25,666	1,942
Administration	89,134	80,805	8,329
Other	-	-	-
Total Ministry Investments	1,531,047	1,686,329	(155,282)
Total Net Income (Loss)	(67,578)	376	(67,959)

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



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BethelLutheranTV

Worship Times: Sunday at 7:30am & 9am - Traditional; 11am - Contemporary
Saturday at 5pm - Casual

