

Jesus loves you. Walk with Him.

# BETHELITE

APRIL 1, 2024: VOL 73, NO. 4

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## WELCOME PASTOR LAUREN WRIGHTSMAN

On April 1, Pastor Lauren Wrightsman joins Bethel as our Transition Lead Pastor, a first step on the path to a permanent call. There will be many occasions for the congregation to welcome and talk with Pastor Lauren in the coming months. Members of the Call Committee had the opportunity to talk with Pastor Lauren shortly before she arrived at Bethel.

We're going from a typical call process where only five people would know who you were before calling you as a pastor to one where the entire congregation is getting to know you. What excites you about that?

This might be the longest interview process I've ever gone through. The call process here is not only new for me, but for Bethel as well. I haven't done anything like this in my 25 years of ministry and see it as a real gift. Usually a Call Committee's work is complete when the new pastor arrives, who is then on their own. This process offers a wonderful shared opportunity to walk alongside the entire congregation and get to know one another in a more holistic way. It's really a gift and offers time for some great conversation centered around where the Holy Spirit is leading Bethel Lutheran next.



Pastor Lauren Wrightsman

We've been studying the book of Acts during Lent and how the Spirit has led the church since the beginning - often in unexpected ways that can't be explained otherwise. Where do you see the Spirit at work here with you and [husband] Dave coming to Bethel? That's a great question. And I can honestly say it's only because of the work of the Spirit that this process was able to move forward. I first heard about Bethel's transition in July and later, when the Synod asked "Have you ever thought about doing an interim?" I said "No." As a settled pastor, interim ministry seemed too risky for a move of this sort. So, I kept on saying "no." However, as soon as I stepped out of the way and began to trust in the work of the Spirit, everything fell into place. It was not an easy decision to make because I love Roseville Lutheran and the ministry I have been a part of there. Dave and I spent a lot of time in prayer and conversation, but as soon as I released all the roadblocks I had put in place to saying "yes" - everything naturally fell into place. It wasn't a forced decision but a natural one - a totally Spirit-led decision. Bethel Lutheran is also blessed with some excellent lay leaders who trusted that Spirit-led work. The interim work that you've done as a congregation is impressive. Talk about the work of the Spirit. Talk about acts of the apostles.

**Clergy couples aren't unusual but have you and Dave ever been pastors at the same church? [Pastor Dave Wrightsman will join Bethel as an Associate Transition Pastor around July 1.]**



Bethel Lutheran Church

When I was on maternity leave with our youngest, Dave was doing an interim at St. Andrews Lutheran teaching the Bethel Series and leading new member classes. When I came back to St. Andrews from maternity leave into my role as an associate pastor, we were together for six months. I don't honestly remember being in his office. I was in a different building doing different ministry.

For us as a couple, as we considered this call, sharing our gifts at the same church was of course one of our conversations. "Can we do this? What will this look like?" Now that we're empty nesters, it seemed like a great opportunity for us to use our passion and love for the ministry and start paddling together in the same boat and in the same direction. We are pretty excited about the opportunity to do this together as we have such varying gifts.

**A church is a place to be fed and nurtured so you can go out into the community.**

**You're going to be meeting a lot of people. What can we do to make that go smoothly?**

Name Tag Sunday needs to be every Sunday for the next six months.

**You're packing up a house in Stillwater and moving into a two-bedroom apartment in Madison. What's that process like?**

I haven't lived in an apartment since I was 27. I've been asking questions of my young adult children like, "When do I sign up for the gas and electric?" As far as living in an apartment, I'm pretty adaptable. I spent two years living abroad - first in Billund, Denmark, and then Nottingham, England, so I'm used to living sparsely and in different places. I'm bringing a few special things to make it feel a bit more homey. Living in an apartment is giving

me time to get to know the Madison area and I see it as a gift that I'm not trying to sell a house right now. Our dog Andy and cat Topsy are coming along with the move. On my first Sunday (April 7) Dave and our daughter Adelee (sophomore at Luther College) will be joining me. Dave will start his ministry at Bethel in

3 months.

**Have you been to Bethel or Bethel Horizons before?**

I've not been to Bethel Horizons and I'm excited to go out there on April 6 for Spring at Horizons. Dave and I were at Bethel in 2009 for the Bethel

Series training and stayed at the Edgewater while my parents (Bethel members, Carolyn and Roger Eigenfeld) took care of our children at their house in Madison. I remember Bill White led a few of those sessions. I've been downtown a few times when we were here to visit my parents, most recently at Thanksgiving when we had an interview with the Executive Committee and a "speed tour" of the building with Denis Vogel.

#### **What are you curious about Bethel?**

I'm curious to see how the Spirit is alive and active and what that means as we move into ministry and the future together. What excites me most is getting into a new community of faith to experience where God is leading. I'm curious to see the impacts the members of the church have on each other as well as the greater Madison area. The walls between a church and the community are much more fluid than ever before. A church is a place to be fed and nurtured so you can go out into the community. When you think about the breath of the Spirit, it's inhale/exhale. We must inhale together, to be fed, and then exhale by living out your faith wherever you work or live. You can't just do one, and it is sometimes hard work to get into that rhythm. I'm curious how Bethel can listen more keenly to conversations that are happening in the community. The relationship with the Synod is essential and is an example of the inhale/exhale. We inhale the resources that God has available to us, and exhale by using those gifts with one another.

#### **What are you looking forward to most about coming to Bethel and to Madison?**

I'm looking forward to being part of another community of faith. The apostle Paul didn't stay in one place and there's something to be learned from that. In each community, Paul recognized the gifts present and I'm excited to see how the Spirit is working in and through the gifts of the Bethel community. The move to the Madison area and Bethel Lutheran seems very natural at this point in my life. I am blessed that my parents live here and are members of

Bethel, and my sister and her family live west of Madison.

#### **What do you expect to be your first order of business at Bethel?**

The first order of business is building relationships -- sitting down to understand people's experiences and what their hopes are. Hearing people's stories is so important to me. We're all on this path of humanity together and all of us are experiencing it in different ways. Stories help us understand the background of who we are and can help us to better understand the shared story of the church. Culture and story have always been important to me. When I was a 17-year-old exchange student in Denmark, I grew to understand that we are all part of God's wonderful creation, living together through our differences, but enriched by shared experiences that cross cultural barriers. My experience in Denmark led me to major in Anthropology and Linguistics at Luther College in Decorah, IA. Stories offer a glimpse of our "cultural DNA" and help us discover the unique characteristics that we share as individuals, and as a congregation.

#### **Since you're an avid reader, what is a recent book you've read and what is special about it?**

The most recent book that comes to mind is *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese. It tells the story of three generations of a family, of love and steadfastness - and there is this beautiful faith element dripping underneath it. My mother and I often share book recommendations with one another and as she read it, I was frequently calling her up to see where she was in the story.

*The Road*, by Cormac McCarthy is one of my favorite books. It is a story of a father and his son living in a dystopian future. I think I have read it 20 times, and with each read I find another example of love and humanity in times of grief and distress. I also like non-fiction writers like Anne Lamott. I appreciate Lamott's humorous take on the human condition and the need to be dipped in grace all the time. Barbara

Brown Taylor – she's another writer I like to read.

#### **What do you want us to know about you?**

I love to laugh. I do. I love to have fun doing ministry. It should be fun and joyous work to trust all of the God-given gifts that we have been given, and then use those gifts collaboratively in the shared work we are called to be a part of.

#### **You've identified your favorite Bible verse as one from Romans: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" What makes this so special to you?**

"How beautiful are the feet..." what a beautiful way to bless us as we go about this work of sharing and living the Gospel message. It captures, for me, the essence of what it means to be a Christian in the world.



## **PASTOR LAUREN WELCOME RECEPTION**

**April 7th**

Please join in as we warmly welcome Pastor Lauren Wrightsman, who begins her work with Bethel as of the beginning of April. In addition to preaching on her first weekend at Bethel, we will have a special reception for her and her husband Pastor Dave Wrightsman in Emmaus Room, so that they can meet and greet as many of us as possible between services, as they will be easily located near the eye-catching Springtime welcome table. Pastor Dave will join Bethel this summer as an interim associate pastor.

This will be a first of its kind pastry offering in her honor, as she makes her way from Minnesota just a bit east to Wisconsin, where the official state specialty is Kringle! Mark your calendars now to be here on that Sunday after Easter – Hallelujah! – and enjoy this sweet Scandinavian treat.



## NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

April 27th, 9am - 1pm

If you or someone you know is interested in joining Bethel – please know that our next orientation is set for Saturday, April 27th 9-1 in Good Shepherd Chapel. And guess what? – there is intel that Pr Lauren Wrightsman plans to be a part of this session, both as a participant and as a leader. We are stepping into a new next phase of Bethel Lutheran Church, and if you're new to Bethel, or a fence sitter in terms of becoming a member, now is the right time. Plan now to attend this informative half day gathering. Should you have questions, or simply just want to register – please let Alice Mowbray know, either by email [alicem@bethel-madison.org](mailto:alicem@bethel-madison.org) or office phone, 608.257.3577 x222, so that we can plan for lunch and for childcare, as needed.

During this season of Lent, as we look to the light and hope of Easter Sunday, add this consideration to your prayers. We look forward to having you more intentionally in our midst! 🌈

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION ICE CREAM SOCIAL

April 14, 2024 @ 10am in  
the Emmaus Room

Bethel Church is blessed beyond measure to have so many volunteers who give their time serving God and our community. We would like to thank you for all that you do, each and everyone one of you! Thank you for serving with a willing heart and a joyful spirit. Please join us, so we can serve you. All are welcome! 🌈



# CARING

Don't miss this series of four major events focused on seeing the sacred in creation and caring for our planet and its creatures, brought to you by Bethel's Caring for Creation Group, ACTJAM, Kids & Family Ministry, and Youth Ministry.

## EARTH SUNDAY: GUEST PREACHER & FORUM SPEAKER PR. JOANN CONROY

Sunday, April 21st

Lutheran pastor Joann Conroy, a member of the Oglala Lakota Sioux, was raised on the Pine Ridge Reservation and is president of the ELCA's Native American and Alaska Native Lutheran Association.



Within and beyond numerous faith-based organizations, she influences the growing acceptance of Native wisdom to inform a sustainable environment. After preaching at our 7:30 and 9:00 worship services, she will present a forum at 10:30 on "Creation Care Requires Indigenous Voices."

## TAKE OUT THE TRASH!

Sunday, April 28th

9:00-12:00 - Explore the Dane County Trash Lab. You won't be able to miss this 27-foot trailer on our parking lot. Filled with playful interactive stations, engaging stories, and compelling photographs and

videos, the Trash Lab illustrates what happens to the stuff we throw away, how landfills work, and



opportunities for more sustainable solutions. It's accessible and entertaining for all ages.

**Note to families:** Care for nursery- and school-age children will be available until noon.

**10:30 Forum:** Making Recycling Work in Madison: Bryan Johnson, Madison's Recycling Coordinator and Streets Division Public Information Officer, will explain



the complex area-wide waste management and recycling system, the limits of recycling technology, our responsibility for correct disposal decisions, and ways to limit how much waste we produce.

## YOUTH-LED VESPERS - HEALING THE CREATION

Wednesday, May 1st

Join us in the beautiful Holden Service for the Healing of Creation, featuring a stirring litany for God's sustaining and renewing love to bless all of creation.

*Caring for Creation events continued on next page.*

# FOR CREATION

*"Curved Path" by Jean Beaber, at Bethel Horizons*

## CHURCH IN THE WILD AT BETHEL HORIZONS

Saturday, May 4th

A synod-wide event led by Bethel Church in the Wild is not just an outdoor church service, but an invitation to worship in the cathedral of earth and sky. After a brief opening liturgy, we'll wander into nature individually or in small groups to see, listen, contemplate, and sense our connectedness to all living things. Then we'll regather to share how we've experienced the sacred in the creation, to "give thanks for the peace of wild things," and to join in Holy

Communion with Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe. We'll conclude with fellowship at a free earth-friendly lunch prepared by Horizons Chef Cena and served by Bethel youth.



Register by April 20 for free lunch by using your smartphone to scan the QR code.

Church in the Wild is generously supported by the Bethel Endowment foundation. 🌈

## BETHEL IS HIRING A WEDDING COORDINATOR

Bethel Lutheran Church is seeking a church member to serve in the capacity of Wedding Coordinator. The individual will be an independent contractor and work as needed based on a wedding being scheduled at the church. This individual will not be considered an employee of Bethel. For a wedding that is being officiated by a pastor of Bethel, the Wedding Coordinator spends approximately 8 hours working with the couple, staff, and pastoral staff for planning and coordination purposes. For a wedding that is not officiated by a pastor of Bethel, the time spent coordinating is less than 8 hours depending on the need. Contact [employment@bethel-madison.org](mailto:employment@bethel-madison.org) for more information and to apply. 🌈



## FOOD PANTRY THANKS

We would like to thank the Lenten Team for organizing a collection of personal essential items during Lent and thank everyone who donated items to the pantry. We also appreciate the amazing response to our request for paper and plastic bags! It really takes all of us working together to keep the pantry running smoothly and successfully, and we are grateful for your ongoing support of this outreach ministry. Wish lists for the pantry are located on the slat board outside the sanctuary. We could use a couple more people to help unload the delivery from Second Harvest on Thursday mornings. Our scheduled delivery time is usually around 8:00, and it takes less than an hour to unload and put everything away. Let Cheryl Frazier know if you can help. 608.206.4539. **Fun Fact:** Forty-six (46) people are involved with the pantry—42 volunteers are Bethel members; 4 are non-members. 🌈

## ARE YOU GETTING OUR WEEKLY EMAILS?

Catch all the updates at Bethel through our Bethel Weekly email, sent out on each Wednesday. You can sign up for these emails on our website at [bethel-madison.org](http://bethel-madison.org) or add your email on your Realm profile and choose to receive emails from Bethel. Also, please be aware that if you do not check the Bethel Weekly emails after a while, your email provider may unsubscribe you from our lists as it thinks you are not interested in our content. 🌈



## COOL STUFF - JOE MUELLER'S STORY

by Angie Buelow

Joe Mueller is an active, adventurous senior at Memorial High School who has always enjoyed being outdoors. Taking Advanced Ropes at Memorial High School was a no-brainer for him.

"I was really excited about this class because of all the cool stuff we get to do outdoors and to be able to have access to climbing is something I was really interested in learning more about," Joe shared. "One thing I really appreciated about our field trip to Horizons was the group of people that we went with, and the venue was just super unique. Our trip to Horizons was very different from what my day-to-day life is like. I really enjoyed it when we spent time meditating and reflecting on the cliffs. It was great to get out of the normal things I typically do. It's something I am going to continue to prioritize in my life as it was very relaxing and enjoyable."

"When you do a field trip like this, you are forced to work with other people, and you need other people. This is a skill that comes naturally on

the ropes course. You learn to rely on and trust each other," shared Joe. "For any school looking to do a field trip to Bethel Horizons, it really will help your students build better relationships with each other."

I was thankful to spend some time with Joe and his class during their visit to Horizons. I was extremely impressed with how they articulated their experiences, shared stories of the friendships that have developed, and how being a part of an Adventure Challenge class has helped them grow as individuals by taking risks and overcoming challenges that made them uncomfortable.

Thank you to all those who support the Adventure and Environmental Education programming at Horizons through donations and/or participation in the upcoming Bike-A-Thon on June 1st, so that we can continue to provide affordable transformational experiences for students. 🌈

# HOMELESS MINISTRY MEAL ASSISTANCE

2023 was a very busy year at Bethel's Homeless Ministry. At the beginning of the year we were serving about 60 guests each day that the ministry was open. By the end of the year that number had increased to 90 guests per day. One of the important aspects of the program is the delicious and nutritious hot meals that we are able to provide each Tuesday and Thursday noon. During 2023 we were very fortunate to have most of the Thursday meals provided for free by a wonderful donor. She made the meals in her house and delivered them to Bethel. Unfortunately, she is not able

to continue to provide meals this year. As you may expect, that has left us with a significant budget problem. We are looking for individuals or groups who would like to sponsor meals or prepare meals. If you or your group would like to sponsor a meal, financial contributions can be sent to the church office and should be designated for Homeless Ministry Meals. If you would like to prepare a meal, please contact Bev Thom at (608) 576-7245 or Paul Nehm at (608) 228-3311. Your generosity is much appreciated. 🌈

# EMERSON ELEMENTARY

Thank you to everyone who participated in one of Bethel's Lenten service projects, a work morning at Emerson Elementary, Bethel's Adopt-a-School partner. Thirteen Bethel members met Saturday, March 2, at Emerson to complete several projects.

One group sanitized furniture and surfaces in kindergarden classrooms. Another cleared out a small storeroom to create a small tutoring space. Math and reading materials were organized and consolidated. The book storage room was neatened, items reshelved, and workspace created. This was a good morning's work, and much appreciated by principal Jessica Awe.

Bethel's final church-wide drive for this school year for Emerson Elementary, is a call for underwear, girls' leggings, and boys' sweatpants. They are desperate for size 5-6 leggings for girls, and sizes 5-6, and 7-8 sweatpants for boys. Also needed is underwear in girls' sizes 6-8, 10-12, and 14-16, and boys' sizes 10-12 and 14-16. Young children have accidents and most children fall in puddles occasionally. New or gently used items are welcome.

If you're out shopping for spring clothes for your kids or grandkids, please consider adding something for the kids at Emerson. We will have a table for collection April 7 and 14 in the Emmaus Room. However, you may turn in items before then at the reception desk either on weekdays or on Sundays. Since the need is urgent, we will make deliveries each week between now and April 15. Thank you for supporting these children in our neighborhood.

There are many ways to support the Adopt-a-School project. Many members have donated boots or other clothing items. Others brought food for the teachers' breakfast during their professional development day in February. Some folks have given money; others donate their time as tutors or art class volunteers. Some pray for the teachers and children. If you would like to receive regular updates as to Emerson's needs, please email Kris Fansler (Krisfansler@gmail.com) to be put on the Volunteers' email list. Each volunteer helps as they are able, sharing their time, treasure, and talents as they can. Each act of service is valued and appreciated. We are truly blessed to be a blessing. 🌈

## XYZ EVENTS

Bus trip to Beaver Dam to see Brand new life a dust

Bowl musical at the community theater on April 7th. Cost is \$30. Wed, the 13th, 20th. Contact me for info.

Sue Marking at wmarking@msn.com.

Thanks

XYZ meets 12th and 26th, at Bethel

Borgwardt Hall at 9am. 🌈

## FINE ARTS TEAM

Save the date; Friday, May 3rd Gallery Night in Madison & at Bethel from 5pm - 8pm. Come to enjoy our Bethel Art and the art of Matthew Braunginn, an "abstract impressionist painter". Email: kengelhunt@gmail.com if interested in volunteering. 🌈

## THE HOMELESS MINISTRY IS PREPARING FOR SPRING

As we start to think of warm Spring breezes, the Homeless Ministry volunteers are inventorying our warmer weather clothing. We are in need of the following items: men's and women's underwear, men's jeans (especially sizes 28-34), socks, Spring jackets, sweatshirts, sweatpants, hoodies, shoes, and t-shirts. In the past Bethel members have been amazing in their generosity in donating clothing items.

If you have things that you would like to donate to the ministry, they can be dropped off at the reception desk throughout the week, or they can be taken to the Pentecost Room on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Thanks in advance for your kindness. 🌈

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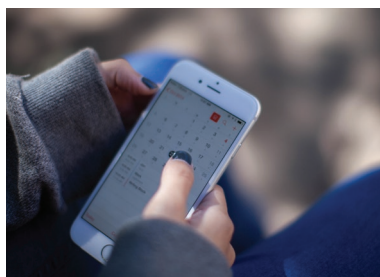
MADISON, WI  
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# BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Avenue  
Madison, WI 53703



## LOOKING AHEAD

### May 1

Healing the Creation Vespers Service

### May 4

10:00 Church in the Wild with earth-friendly lunch at Bethel Horizons

### July 2 - 5

Summer at Horizons

### July 20 - 21

Getting the Love You Want Workshop

### July 29 - August 1

Vacation Bible Camp 🌈

## FUND FACTS

**1** Expense to fund one day of the year for BLC \$5436 – based on the 2024 operating budget

**2** Gifts given to support Bethel's operating budget last year came from 654 households, and 79% of total gifts were from Pledged plans. 🌈

## FEBRUARY 2024 YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Offerings	265,818	263,416	2,402
Miscellaneous revenue	41,629	66,060	(24,431)
Non-operating revenue	3,592	1,334	2,258
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>311,039</b>	<b>330,810</b>	<b>(19,771)</b>
<b>MINISTRY INVESTMENTS</b>			
Staff	166,417	234,875	(68,458)
Ministry & Resource Teams	66,907	68,698	(1,791)
Benevolence	4,667	4,583	84
Administration	31,410	16,518	14,892
Other	-	-	-
<b>Total Ministry Investments</b>	<b>269,401</b>	<b>324,674</b>	<b>(55,273)</b>
<b>Total Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>41,638</b>	<b>6,136</b>	<b>35,502</b>

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 - Acoustic Casual

