



BETHELITE

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Walking in the Dark Toward Easter Light

Easter morning begins in the dark

Before the sun rises, before the first birds sing, before the world stirs awake, the women make their way to the tomb. They carry grief and spices, expecting death but finding something else entirely. The stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty, and the risen Christ is already on the move.



Pastor Lauren Wrightsman

Barbara Brown Taylor, in *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, reminds us **that faith is not just about walking confidently in the light—it is also about learning to trust God in the dark.** We spend so much of our lives in places of uncertainty, loss, waiting, and mystery. And yet, scripture shows us again and again that God is present in the darkness: leading the Israelites by a pillar of fire at night, speaking to Samuel in the dark of the temple, meeting Nicodemus in a nighttime conversation, and raising Jesus from the dead in the hidden stillness before dawn.

As we approach Easter, many of us may find ourselves walking through our own shadows—grief, doubt, unanswered questions, or simply the unknowns of what comes next. The good news is that God is already there. The resurrection doesn't wait for daylight; it happens in the dark. The hope of Easter is not just that Jesus is risen, but that he meets us where we least expect, in the places we thought were beyond hope, and calls us into new life.

This Lent and Easter season, may we learn to trust the God who walks with us in darkness and in light. May we follow Christ's footsteps from the shadows of the tomb to the brightness of resurrection morning, knowing that even when we cannot see the way forward, God is leading us toward life.

Pastor Lauren Wrightsman



BETHEL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 53703
608.257.3577 www.bethel-madison.org



EASTER WEEK SCHEDULE

Maundy Thursday

Apr 17
6:30 pm

Good Friday
Apr 18

12 noon & 6:30 pm

Easter Saturday

Apr 19
5:00 pm

Easter Sunday

Apr 20
7:30 am
9:00 am
11:00 am

EXCITING NEWS: BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH 10AM TELECAST

Begins Sunday, Apr 27

Watch Live Online at 9am
(Facebook or YouTube)

or catch the previous week's telecast
on WKOW (Channel 27) at 10am

Bethel's 9:00 a.m. service provides a rich and vibrant worship experience, and we're excited to bring this to our TV audience. Because of this shift, our telecast will now air one week later at our regular time of 10 am on WKOW (Channel 27).

ATTENDER TO MEMBER

Sunday, May 18
10:30 am – 1 pm

Are you ready to deepen your faith journey? Join our "Attender to Member" classes at Bethel Lutheran Church! These sessions offer a welcoming space to learn about our mission, beliefs, and ministries while exploring membership in our faith community.

Whether you're new or a longtime attender, we'd love to have you. A light lunch will be served.

Registration is required.
For details or to sign up, contact Chelssey at chelssey@bethel-madison.org or scan the QR code.



LUTHER COLLEGE CATHEDRAL CHOIR

SATURDAY, APR 26
10 AM | SANCTUARY

FREE EVENT!

Bethel will host Luther College's Cathedral Choir for a concert performance. The choir, directed by Dr. Mark Potvin, is composed of sophomores, juniors, and seniors from the College, all of whom bring skill and dedication to their performances.

This year's tour, themed "In Which We Have Our Life and Breath," explores the many relationships we experience—our connections with the divine, the natural world, and one another. The program features a wide variety of musical selections, including sacred, classical, and contemporary pieces.

Whether you are a longtime fan of choral music or attending for the first time, this concert promises to be an inspiring and memorable event.

*Made possible by a generous grant from the Bethel Endowment Foundation.



Bethel Crew Serving at Luke House

LUKE HOUSE

Hunger is a persistent issue in our community, but at **Luke House**, the response is simple: *feed the hungry, no questions asked.* Located at 310 South Ingersoll Street, Luke House has been a lifeline for Madison's most vulnerable residents since 1986, serving nine free meals a week—that's 468 meals a year—to those in need.

A Community Effort

Luke House operates with the dedication of volunteers from 35 local churches who prepare, serve, and share meals with guests. Sitting down together fosters a sense of community, breaking barriers and offering fellowship in a space where everyone is welcome.

Each meal serves between 60 and 120 guests, many of whom face homelessness, financial hardship, or other personal struggles. While the causes of poverty are complex, the mission of Luke House is clear: no paperwork, no screening—just show up and eat.

Bethel's Role in the Mission

Bethel Lutheran Church has been a key contributor to Luke House's Community Meal Program since 1994. Each month, Bethel households and volunteers prepare and serve a noon meal for those in need.

Food contributions from Bethel households sustain this effort. Some individuals donate bread, milk, fruit, or vegetables, while others prepare casseroles or baked goods. Whether

donating regularly or occasionally, every contribution helps ensure that no one goes hungry.

The next serving date is **Monday, April 14th**, and volunteers are welcome to join from 10 am – 1 pm. The meal is assembled and served by many hands, making it an excellent opportunity to connect with others in service.

A Call to Action

Luke House receives no government funding—all operations rely on the generosity of private donors and faith communities. Churches play a central role, organizing meal services and providing essential support. Many congregations have been part of this mission for over 30 years, drawn by the opportunity to make a tangible impact, live out their faith, and build camaraderie.

The need for food and fellowship in Madison is great, ongoing, and immediate. Whether through donating money, food, or time, individuals and churches can make a difference.

Every gift to Luke House, Inc. (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit) transforms into the meals and hospitality that sustain those in need. Join us in fighting hunger—one meal at a time.

For more information on how to help email bethel@bethel-madison.org.



BETHEL'S MINISTRY TO THE HOMELESS

Sunday, Apr 13 | 10:30 am
Fireside Room

For 17 years, Bethel has provided **Madison's only faith-based service to homeless individuals**, welcoming about 70 guests every Tuesday and Thursday in the Pentecost Room.

Bethel's volunteers want to share their experiences and insights into the challenges faced by homeless individuals and the support they provide. Longtime volunteer Bev Thom will offer her perspective, drawing from years of daily problem-solving and leading a weekly sharing circle with over 30 guests. She deeply understands their struggles and the help they need.

Following her, Paul Nehm, Ministry chair, will provide an overview of Bethel's operations, including clothing distribution, food services, and overall support efforts.

There will also be ample opportunity for questions and discussion, offering a deeper understanding of Bethel's mission and ways to support it.



EASTER GIVING FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Bethel's Lent and Easter giving this year supports urgent needs of **Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin (LSS) and the ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)**.

In 2024, LSS served 30,000 individuals across Wisconsin and the U.P., yet these are uncertain times and LSS is preparing for financial impact. One example is the \$250,000 shortfall caused by a change in U.S. policy to support refugees. Lutheran Social Services across the U.S., in partnership with Global Refuge, is one of nine resettlement agencies that works with the U.S. government to resettle refugees. In Wisconsin, LSS has resettled over 11,000 refugees over the last 50 years, including the Bhutanese that Bethel supported.

On January 20, the U.S. halted new refugee admissions for 90 days and on January 24, halted funding for refugees already in the U.S.

Government funding provides 90-days of services to refugees including enrolling children in school, paying rent for three months and helping refugees find jobs. LSS in Wisconsin has decided to absorb the financial hit of

\$250,000 over the 90-day period. Lutheran Disaster Response faces a different kind of urgency from natural and manmade disasters in the U.S. and around the world. The wildfires in Los Angeles and Maui and hurricanes in North Carolina and Florida are recent examples where LDR was on the scene to help - not just as a 'first responder' but staying to help rebuild for months and years to come. LDR is able to have a presence in these areas by partnering with local ELCA synods and agencies on the ground.

Internationally, LDR partners with Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Lutheran World Relief. One example is the partnership with LWF to build underground classrooms in Kharkiv, Ukraine, providing safe learning spaces for over 3,500 students and school staff. Over the past three years, LDR has accompanied countless people affected by war in Ukraine by partnering with companion churches and community-based organizations in Europe.

Supporting Lutheran Social Services and Lutheran Disaster Response is one way to turn compassion into action that touches lives. In so doing, we live out our calling to care for our neighbors and serve those in need.

Access the online Easter giving form here: <https://www.bethel-madison.org/>



Easter Giving 2025

Scan QR code to donate online

ONLINE FORM
<https://www.bethel-madison.org/give/pledge-donate-online/easter-garden/>

Please write **separate checks** for Easter Garden & Bethel Disaster Assistance. The **Deadline is Tuesday, April 8**, to return this form and money to Bethel for donations to be included in the Bethel Weekly.

Easter Garden

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

X \$22 =

OF PLANTS

TOTAL DUE

Flowers may be picked-up after last worship service on April 20 or after.

Bethel Disaster Assistance *

*Split between LDR & LSS

CIRCLE ONE: In Memory In Honor

NAME

BY

AMOUNT

CASH/CHECK #

ENVELOPE #

PHONE

Return entire form to: Bethel Lutheran Church
Attn: Easter Giving
312 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 53703

MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH SMALL GROUPS

Your new **Connections Ministry Team** (formerly Nurturing team) is excited to support you in creating opportunities for Bethel members and non-members to find new ways to connect and build community at Bethel. There are many new ideas that have come up in our meetings recently. We are looking for leaders to coordinate groups around these activities or if you have other ideas, we'd love to hear those also!

Arts, Crafts & Coffee or Armature Artists - suggesting a two-hour block, come and go, all media, could be works inspired by the bible or nature.

Game Night - Bridge, Mahjong, trivia, board games or other games that bring faith into the activity

Norwegian Small Group - could be speakers or discussion on topics about the heritage where Bethel started.

Bethel Historical Small Group

New Dad's Support Group

Single Women 30-60 yrs Small Group

Men's group 30-60 yrs Small Group

Men's Breakfast on Sat am



Bethel Builds - bring back this wonderful ministry. It could be single workdays at Habitat for Humanity, special projects in senior or less able member's homes, community projects

Traveling Hikers - we need new faces to start up a new hikers group. The previous group traveled to destinations for hikes, but this could be shorter travel in the midwest.

Urban Hikers - Start at Bethel and hike around downtown ending up back at Bethel for coffee and conversation. Learn about some of the neighborhoods and unique sites around town at a slower pace than when you drive around.

Movie Messages - Use the Focus on the Family Plugged In Movie Review evaluations of kid's movies to find hidden messages and discuss them with adults and kids.

Contact Michelle Jolly if you are interested in leading or co-leading a group or for any other questions (bethel@bethel-madison.org).

CHURCH IN THE WILD

Saturday, May 10
10:00 – Noon

Vermont
Lutheran Church
Black Earth

Join Church in the Wild to “wander and worship in the wild” on the beautiful grounds of Vermont Lutheran Church, whose 100 acres of restored prairie, woodland, and wetland include hiking trails, an old cemetery, and even a trout stream.

After a brief opening liturgy, we'll wander individually or in small groups into the cathedral of earth and sky to seek the Creator in the Creation as we see, listen, contemplate, and sense our connectedness to all living things. Then we'll regather around the Communion table to share our experiences and to offer thanks “for the peace of wild things.”

Why not pack a picnic lunch to enjoy afterward?

Families: Treat Mom to a day with Mother Nature by making Church in the Wild part of your Mothers' Day weekend.

Todd Fansler will be happy to provide more information.
(bethel@bethel-madison.org)

Church in the Wild is sponsored by our South Central Wisconsin Synod's Caring for Creation team.



CARING FOR CREATION SPRING FORUMS

Wildlife, Composting & Climate

Sundays, 10:30 am
Good Shepherd Chapel

*Caring for Creation's three
Spring Forums offer a wide range
of engaging topics and speakers:*

April 27 **What Good is a Wild Species?**

Why care about the extinction crisis? Just after Earth Day, renowned ornithologist and conservationist Stan Temple—successor to Aldo Leopold's academic role—shares insights from his adventure-filled career. “I retired without any of the dozens of species I worked on going extinct. Most are doing better, even as more species become endangered.”

May 4 **Sustain Dane's Mission: Food Waste & Sustainability**

Samantha Worden, Program Manager for Sustain Dane, fosters learning, connection, and action in sustainability. With a background in hydroponic farming and food circular economies, she's passionate about change.

— Plus! A brief update on Bethel's recycling program, including a raffle and show-and-tell!

May 18 **Climate Change Revisited: Warnings & Retreat**

2024 saw record-breaking storms, floods, fires, and droughts. Despite clean energy advances, global emissions keep rising, and the new U.S. administration is scaling back climate action. David Knuti, international energy analyst, joins automotive research scientist Todd Fansler for a lively discussion on what's next and what can be done.

*Bring your mind, your heart, and
your questions!*

CHAT N' CHEW

A New Ministry of Connections at Bethel

Eating, socializing, learning: how good can it get? You are invited to enjoy all three by joining the new "CHAT N' CHEW" group. Men, women, and teens are all invited to gather once a month in a home to share a dish and recipe around a specially selected theme.

For example, the first event features a dish that is SUPER EASY. Each participant brings a favorite SUPER EASY dish and the recipe. The host provides the beverages and the table setting.

Future themes might include: a secret ingredient, a seasonal choice, a low-cal dish, a meatless entree, last minute company food, comfort food, an inexpensive meal, or dishes with a common ingredient such as sweet potato. Any number of creative themes can be chosen.

*The events will be from 6-8 the fourth
TUESDAY of the month, usually in the
residence of the month's host.*

Here is what you do: Contact the host or hostess by Monday night preceding the TUESDAY event to reserve a spot. Declare your dish preference aligning with the theme of the month. Arrive by 6 pm with your contribution and copies of your recipe. We will enjoy time together, good food and new ideas. Each month will be a surprise group and guaranteed fun!

Tuesday, April 29
SUPER EASY dishes at Carrie Bernhardt's

Tuesday, May 27
SALADS at Nancy Wiebe's

Tuesday, June 24
COMFORT FOOD at the Gjerde's

Tuesday, July 22
TBD at John and Jacquie Shanda's

*More info to come. Questions? RSVP?
Contact bethel@bethel-madison.org*



ALMOST HEAVEN **BETHEL@HORZIONS**

by Heather Rainwater Moen

“Camp is the place where I feel safe, where I can be myself.”

“After a few retreats, our bond with the other families was so close. We have raised our families together.”

“It feels so good to see the younger generations enjoying Horizons as much as we do.”

Generations of Bethel members have found harmony with God, Self, Others and Nature while hiking the trails, creating art, attending retreats and participating in summer camp at Bethel Horizons Camp in Dodgeville.

Intergenerational retreats in the spring, summer and fall are your chance to experience Horizons for the first time, to meet new Bethel friends, or to reconnect with your church family in the place you’ve loved for years.

Unplug from social media and set aside your screens. Let someone else take care of dinner. Make memories. Laugh a lot. Get lost in a great conversation. Reconnect with nature and experience the sacred among Horizon’s 550 acres of cliffs, trails and state of the art facilities located in Wisconsin’s beautiful driftless area.

What do we do at retreats?

Folks who love the outdoors enjoy hiking, mountain biking, fishing, stargazing, rappelling and the high ropes challenge course. Others prefer arts and crafts, board games, card games, relaxing by the fire or taking a quiet moment for reading or napping in our comfortable lodge with stunning views. Kids enjoy running free, playing hide n seek, and exploring nature. Service projects, prayer and worship draw our community together.

Where do we stay? The Prairie Center lodging facility has individual rooms with private bathrooms, heating/AC, wifi, dining hall, and a large common room with a stone fireplace.

What do we eat? Horizons’ executive chef provides 3 meals per day. Dietary needs are accommodated.

Spring@Horizons, April 11-12 and Summer@Horizons, July 1-4 are open for registration now. Questions about Horizons retreats? Contact Heather Moen heather@bethel-madison.org



HOMELESS MINISTRY CLOTHING NEEDS

Bethel’s Homeless Ministry volunteers would like to thank all the wonderful people who donated clothing items during the winter. Often the donations are made anonymously, so we can’t thank you directly. We want you to know that we and the guests we serve deeply appreciate your generosity.

Over the last four months your help has allowed us to provide almost 6,000 clothing items to those who need them. As we prepare for the Spring and Summer months we are in need of the following items: shorts, men’s shoes, t-shirts, button-down shirts, jeans, pants, belts, light-weight jackets, men’s and women’s underwear, women’s leggings, socks, and hats.

Donations can be dropped off at the reception desk any time the building is open or on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Pentecost Room.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL: REQUESTED IN HOME BY APR 1 2025

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U.S. POSTAGE
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MADISON, WI
PERMIT 602

BETHEL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

312 Wisconsin Avenue
Madison, WI 53703



LOOKING AHEAD

Apr 12 | 9:30 am/11 am
Jonh Oncken Funeral

Apr 13 - Apr 20
Holy Week

Apr 25 | 9:30 am/11 am
Bill Wiedenbeck Funeral

Apr 26 | 10 am
Luther College Cathedral Choir

FUND FACT\$

Gifts directly to Bethel from your IRA (individual retirement account) are not added to your taxable income, but they can count toward your RMD (required minimum distribution).

Remember, an IRA is one of the 'worst' assets to leave to your family due to the tax implication.

Here is a simple yet significant way to give: **A non-probate transfer vehicle, like a TOD/POD (transfer or paid on death) deed** is a great way for you to leave significant eventual charitable gifts that costs you nothing now. These are most suitable for an investment account, bank account, CD (certificate of deposit) or life insurance policy. Use of your beneficiary designation to name Bethel is another easy way to plan your legacy gift.

FEBRUARY 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance
REVENUES			
Offerings	268,352	271,000	(2,648)
Miscellaneous revenue	127,757	72,936	54,821
Non-operating revenue	4,789	3,250	1,539
Total Revenue	400,898	347,186	53,712
MINISTRY INVESTMENTS			
Staff	248,389	251,928	(3,539)
Ministry & Resource Teams	69,121	73,805	(4,684)
Benevolence	11,333	7,499	3,834
Administration	16,166	13,652	2,514
Total Ministry Investments	345,009	346,884	(1,875)
Total Net Income (Loss)	55,889	302	55,587

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



bethel_madison



Bethel.Lutheran.Madison.WI



BethelLutheranTV

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

