

Bethany News for September 2021

From the President:

Just to update you on our Bethany Family- we are open for business! We as a council are working diligently for all of you during this ever changing transition phase. Our focus is not merely to survive but to thrive as a congregation. In order to move forward, changes will need to be made as well as adjustments as we strive for a new normal. Key to this process is your involvement and prayers. Every congregation is unique in their make up and respective needs; therefore, we will be seeking input from you via surveys and discussions. Committees are being formed to address needs, but know your opinions and suggestions are always welcome. Contact any council members or call the church office knowing we value your input. I have faith in our family and know we will not only survive but thrive knowing God will guide us.

Cheryl Matzke

Surveys! Just a reminder to fill out and return your survey at your earliest convenience (via email, mail, or phone) We can also stop by your residence if you wish. We would like an accurate count as possible for our membership list. Thank you!

Church Office Hours

We are doing our best to keep the church office open set hours for your convenience. We will have someone available for you from 1- 4:30pm Tuesday through Friday. A voice mail can be left after hours and we will get back to you. If its an emergency please contact Cheryl at 218-689-2093, or Sherry at 218-689-6943, or Sue at 218-689-7680.

From Pastor Gary:

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:3–6, NIV)

Dear Bethany Friends,

Linda and I wish to thank you for the heartfelt retirement celebration which was clearly so lovingly prepared. Thank you for the cards, kind words, and money. We're going to enjoy some great trips to Florida thanks to you! Also, thank you for 31 years of fellowship and friendship grounded in the grace of our God who loves us so abundantly.

You have been an inspiration to us, blessing us with 31 years of partnership in ministry that has truly been a joy!

May we all continue to carry on the good work which God has begun in us and will bring to completion on the day of Jesus Christ.

God's blessings,
Gary and Linda Graff

Please note: Pastor Gary's cell phone number is incorrect on the cards distributed from his retirement party. His number is: 701-566-3363.

Additional contacts: church email @ bethanylutheranrlf@gmail.com

For Sunday School: Kale Miller @ kalem03@yahoo.com

For Confirmation: Cheryl Matzke @ 219-689-2093 or church email

Maureen Hams @ 218-689-2184 or mhams@tvoc.org

Announcements/Calendar: Sherry Largis at bethanylutheranrlf@mail.com

Website/Facebook: VickiDuden @ 218-791-7020 or vickiduden@rocketmail.com

Outreach (shut-ins, hospitalizations, etc): please contact the church office at 253-2589, or Cheryl at 218-689-2093, or use the church's email.

Worship!

We are open for worship! A few precautionary steps are being taken at this time to keep us extra safe. No passing of the peace or offering plate. Masks are strongly recommended to be worn indoors by Bishop Tesch and the CDC. We as a council are monitoring the situation and will inform you of any further change to worship.

Communion: Our goal is to have communion at least once a month. We will be celebrating in person communion on September 19th with Pastor Mary Lundquist. Protocol will be the same as was followed previously.

A worship committee has been formed to plan and arrange services for our church. Vicki Duden has consented to chair this committee. We welcome any input/suggestions regarding types of services or possible speakers, etc. Please see Vicki with your ideas.

Upcoming Worship Services

9/12 Sunday School and Confirmation Students will meet at 9:00am

Rally Sunday and Blessing of the Backpacks conducted by Pathways

9/19 Sunday School (pre-k through 7th grade) at 9:00am

Worship with communion at 10:00am led by Pastor Mary Lundquist

9/26 Sunday School and Confirmation (pre-k through 8th grade) at 9:00am

Worship with Keith & Linda Axvig of Sunshine Ministries at 10:00am

Upcoming Activities

9/15 All 6th through 12th graders and their families are invited to a supper (a taco bar) at 6:30 to discuss the upcoming year of confirmation and youth group activities.

9/15 WELCA meeting at 7:00pm in the library. All women of Bethany are invited to attend.

9/19 Benefit for Dylan Witcherman at the Plummer Hall from 1-4pm. A free will meal with a bake sale and silent auction.

9/21 Fall Picnic for all Red Lake County Senior Citizens at Bethany

RED LAKE COUNTY SENIOR PICNIC

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2021
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
RED LAKE FALLS

SERVING 11-1 PM

DELICIOUS FREE LUNCH



JOIN FELLOW SENIORS

RED LAKE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON AGING

Prayers of Support

We as a congregation believe in the power of prayer; therefore we ask you to include these people in your daily prayers. We, as Christians, are all part of God's family. We support and pray for our entire and extended faith community.

- Prayers for Owen Nelson, Deb Piche, Phylis Borg, and Vicki Guillimette in their recovery phase. Please help them continue to heal.
- Prayers for Marne Thompson and Nicole Holt in their journey with cancer. Please give them strength.
- Prayers for Dylan Witcherman, age 13, and Alex Guillingsrud, age 8, and their families as they embark on their cancer fighting journeys. Please wrap them in love, prayers, and support.
- Prayers for all our teachers, the support staff, and the students as they start another school year.

Benefit for Dylan Witcherman

On Sunday September 19th from 1-4pm at the Plummer Hall. There will be a free will offering meal with silent auction and bake sale. All the proceeds will go to Dylan and his family for travel and lodging as he battles brain cancer.

Donations for Alex Guillingsrud

Donations for Alex and his family to help cover costs in his battle against cancer can be dropped off at Dakota Heritage Bank in RLF.

Opportunities to Help Your Church!

Are you tech savvy? We need someone possessing good computer and technology skills in assisting with worship and other church activities. Contact Wes Largis at 219-280-4458 for more information and if you can help.

Sunshine Team

We are recruiting people interested in being part of our outreach team. All that is required is willingness to visit or connect (at least once a month) with our shut ins, those residing in assisted living and nursing home, and those hospitalized or recuperating at home. Contact Cheryl Matzke at 218-689-2093 if interested in being on our team. Time commitment is minimal and in accordance with your schedule- just need your smile!

Have a great month!

Our Bethany family is doing more than surviving - we are thriving!

A Pastoral Message from Bishop Tesch:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was and is and is to come! As I write this from my home in Detroit Lakes, it is raining here and across much of our region. I am giving thanks for this respite from the drought, even as I continue to pray for farmers and ranchers whose livelihoods have been so severely impacted. Thank you for your prayers and for your good work serving your neighbors in your local communities of our Northwestern Minnesota Synod!

Speaking of “respite,” we enjoyed a brief one from the pandemic this summer when we were able to remove our masks and return to gathering without restrictions. However, I have recently begun wearing a mask again when I am among you indoors due to the increasing spread of the Delta variant of the virus. Believe me, I am as disheartened to be writing this message as you are to be receiving it!

The Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommend the wearing of masks indoors by both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. Masks have been proven to greatly limit the spread of this virus. The new variant is twice as contagious, and studies suggest that even vaccinated people who are asymptomatic for disease may still spread the virus to unvaccinated people who could then become ill with COVID-19. Accordingly, I am recommending that worshippers in our congregations return to wearing masks indoors in order to protect our neighbors from this disease.

As always, we are guided by faith, facts and love. We have faith that God has called people into vocations of public health, medicine and pharmaceutical research, and through them God is protecting us. I have heard some say that they don’t need to be vaccinated or wear masks because they trust God. To quote Martin Luther, “This is not faith in God; this is testing him.” (See Luke 4:9-13 or [this pastoral guidance from Martin Luther!](#)) Yes, sometimes God intervenes with miracles, but miracles are rare. In between the miracles, God is still at work. Christians trust that God is protecting us through our God-given skills and vocations, and through gifts like vaccines that are derived from God’s good creation.

I believe that soon we’ll be free of this pandemic. Experts tell us that will happen when the vaccination rate gets above 70%. It currently stands at around 50% or lower for most of our counties. The good news is that with the spread of the Delta variant, vaccination rates are also rising. If you are hesitating for religious reasons, then please hear me clearly: as your Synod’s called Pastor, I am telling you that there are no religious reasons to refuse the vaccine and lots of religious reasons to receive it.

Besides being guided by our faith, we are also guided by facts. In this matter, the relevant fact is the rapidly rising case numbers in all of our Synod.

Finally, we are guided by love. You and I may not fear getting the virus, but we all should be concerned about the possibility that we could unintentionally spread the virus to vulnerable neighbors who could become sick or even die. This is how we follow Jesus. We use our God-given freedom, not for ourselves, but for our neighbor – like Jesus did for us when He freely chose death on a cross for you and me.

Thank you for your faithfulness in the Gospel! I look forward to seeing you in my travels or over Zoom sometime soon. Mask or no mask, the Holy Spirit is still gathering us to be her faithful church!

In Christ our Brother,



Pastor Bill Tesch

Bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA