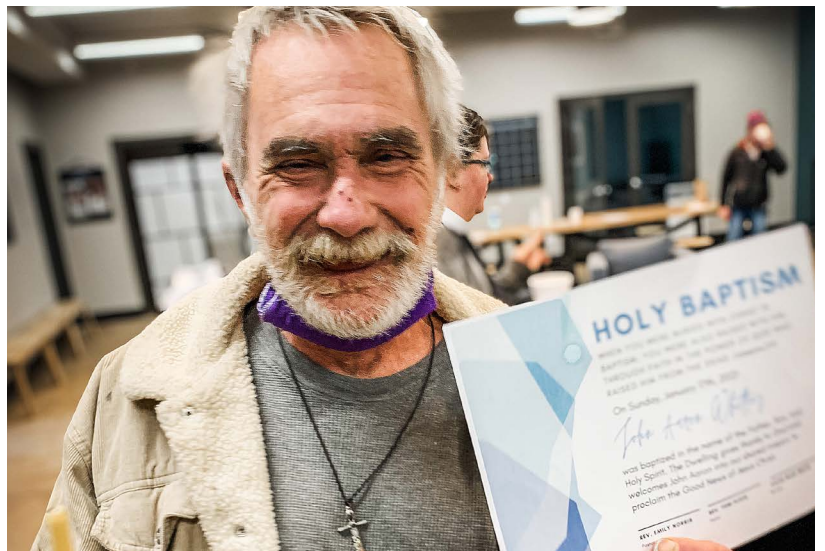


ANNUAL REPORT

2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



A MESSAGE FROM ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP

*Elizabeth
Eaton*

Dear friends in Christ,

The last year has been one of adapting and learning. In many places we have seen vibrant and vital ministry spring forth from changes made due to the pandemic. Digital worship opportunities have introduced to our congregations people who may never have walked into one of our buildings. Many congregations have found new ways to invite people to share their generosity through online giving. And many ministries have found just how vital they are as they continue to serve alongside people in their communities.

The first chapter of James, verse 17, reminds us that "Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." Yes, this has been a season of change, but Scripture also reminds us that we serve a generous, steadfast God.

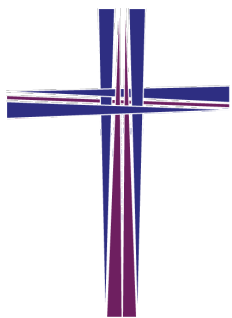
While we stay rooted in God's enduring, unchanging promise, God also gives us the gifts of creativity and learning. Across all three expressions of the church we have used those gifts to serve God, love our neighbor and share the good news of Jesus Christ. In this time of change, we have opened our arms wider to meet people where they are, living into the reality that we are not defined or confined by the four walls of our buildings.

Through all this, I am so grateful for your generous sharing of creativity, time, talents and resources. All good gifts do come from God, and we are called to share and use those gifts. We have and will continue to answer that call. There is still much change and learning to come, but God's steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."



Bethany Lutheran Church

We **INVITE** all; We **GROW** in faith;
We **GO** to share God's love and grace.



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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Bethany Lutheran Church

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Annual Report and Thank You!

From Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson January 2022



*Thank you, for joining us in the work of sharing the gospel!
Randy Olson, Laura Ramlow, Laurie Skow-Anderson, Greg
Kaufmann, Liz Bartsch, Erin Nelson*

Dear Pastors, Deacons, SAMs, and Lay Leaders of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

Are you ready for your annual congregational meeting? As a parish pastor I did everything I could to make our annual meeting a **celebration of ministry**. It was a time to thank everyone for their part of the good work we were doing together in Jesus' name. We had door prizes, church appropriate joke contests, and one year we had a fashion show featuring clothes from our church's thrift store. I created a PowerPoint with photos highlighting every

aspect of our congregation's ministry and a narrative budget that explained how we supported all these ministries financially. We had party themed meals, decorations, childcare and music. We laughed and had fun. There was even time for a business meeting to approve the budget, elect officers and talk about the new ministries we hoped to do in the future. I hope you can celebrate at least a little at your annual meetings. This year, more than ever, we need to find some way to celebrate that:

1. **We are still here!** COVID didn't win. A pandemic and social unrest didn't stop us from proclaiming the God's good news of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
2. **The church never closed**, it found new ways to connect with the community and share the transforming love of Jesus.
3. **We learned** how to live with this virus, looking for new ways move forward in God's mission.
4. We are all listening, praying and planning to take **our next most faithful step** as disciples following in the way of Jesus.
5. We've become clearer about **our purpose as a church**. We exist so that the next generation will come to know and love Jesus and all generations will experience God's grace and forgiveness.

*I am grateful for your prayerful
and financial support of the
work that we do together as a
public church.*

This is all amazing and worthy of a party. So throw a party during your annual meeting this year!

However, you and I both know that everything is not totally amazing and awesome. Yes, we can certainly give thanks and

celebrate. We can celebrate surviving, but we can't ignore the suffering, loss and the grief of the past two years. So we can celebrate this year at our annual meeting knowing that lament precedes joy. This joy is grounded on God's presence that was with us in our suffering and pain. Luther said "God can be found only in suffering and the cross,"¹ and that we can never be sure of God's presence unless we are looking at suffering. It is in the suffering that God is bringing hope and redemption. This is the basis of the Theology of the Cross and is what gives birth to a Theology of Joy.² It is from this place of deep joy, joy that remembers suffering, that we consider our next most faithful step. **What is your next most faithful step as a congregation?**

¹ [Martin Luther Helps Us See Divine Love in Pandemi... | Christianity Today](#)

² Dr. Anna Madsen, presentation to Region 5 bishops and staff, November 2021.

April 30, 2022 Synod Assembly
OUR NEXT MOST FAITHFUL STEP:
Taking it to the Streets-Being a Public Church
Proverbs 1:20 *Wisdom cries out in the **street**;
in the public places Wisdom raises her voice.*

That is the question we are asking at our annual synod learning events **Walking Together and EPIC** (Church Council Training) both on March 26 in person at UW EC Davies Center, and our **Synod Assembly** April at Trinity in Eau Claire.

Dear Partners in the Gospel, the theologian Douglas John Hall writes that *“the good news is good because it challenges and displaces bad news ... It is good news because it engages, takes on and does battle with the bad news, offering another alternative, another vision of what could be, another way into the future.”*³

The church is called is to proclaim good news that challenges bad news. We are called to join God in this work in the public arena. There is a gap between what is currently happening in our community and God’s will for all people to flourish and experience abundant life. The bad news is that gap. We see the gap as hunger, poverty, homelessness, sickness, violence, greed, and injustice. The church is called to do God’s work with our hands and feet and voice to bridge the gap between what is and what God intends. We gather in worship and are sent out into the streets to serve the Lord as we affirmed in baptism *to proclaim Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following in the ways of Jesus, working for justice and peace in all the earth.*⁴

We are called out of our church buildings and into the streets, into the public arena to be public witnesses to the way of Jesus, the life that God intended for all people. We are pulled out of of our church buildings and into the streets to be church for the sake of the world.

This year’s Bright Spots awards at the synod assembly will lift up congregations and organizations within this synod that are taking their ministry to the street, doing ministry out in public, engaged in the public arena.

Please let me know how your congregation is engaged as a Public Church. How is your church engaged in the public arena and taking its ministry to the streets? How are the members of your congregation being equipped/trained to be church in your community? I am truly grateful for your partnership in the gospel.

Bishop Laurie

2022 Synod Calendar Dates

January 17 Winter Theological Event-Guest Speaker-Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton-Luther Park

January 22-26 Civil Rights Pilgrimage-Atlanta, Georgia and Montgomery, Alabama

March 15 Deadline for resolutions to be submitted for synod assembly

March 19 Synod Council Meeting

March 26 Walking Together and EPIC Eau Claire Davies Center: Your Next Most Faithful Step

April 21, 24, 25 Zoom Pre-Assembly Forums

April 30 Synod Assembly-Taking it to the Streets: The Public Church

July 18-24 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis and MYLE-Multicultural Youth Leadership Event

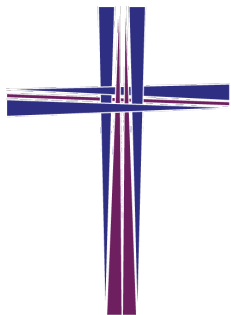
August 9-12 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, Ohio



³ [Public Church Scholars - Religion and Philosophy - | \(augsburg.edu\)](https://www.augsburg.edu/public-church-scholars-religion-and-philosophy)

⁴ ELW 237

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remember before our God your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.



Bethany Lutheran Church

We **INVITE** all; We **GROW** in faith;
We **GO** to share God's love and grace.

Agenda

January 30, 2022 - 9:15 a.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Welcome and Pastoral Remarks
- Agenda Approval
- Approval of Minutes of January 31, 2021 Annual Meeting
- Approval of Minutes of September 19, 2021 Special Congregational Meeting
- Committee Reports
- Trust Fund Report
- Financial Reports
- Election of Council Members
- Election of Trust Fund Members
- Election of Nominating Committee (5)
- Election of Synod Assembly Representatives
 - April 30, 2021 - Hybrid Event
 - 3 delegates
- Election of Luther Park Representatives
 - Luther Park Annual Meeting - date to be determined
 - 3 delegates
- Approval of 2022 Budget
- Other Business
- Annual Meeting Date & Time - January 29, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.
- Closing Comments
- Adjournment
- Closing Prayer

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Bethany Lutheran Church

January 31, 2021 - 9:30 a.m.

Meeting was held via ZOOM and call-in participation. Attendance was taken by Jennifer Nelson, Council Secretary. List was crossed checked with Pastor Luci Sesvold and Leah Hullinger, Communications & Publications Specialist. Attendance was verified to be 149 confirmed members.

Agenda Approval: Brad Wiedmann moved to approve the agenda, Ted Hakala 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried.

Opening Devotions – led by Pastor Peter Muschinske on Ephesians 4

Approval of Minutes from January 26, 2020 Annual Meeting – Dennis Zahrbock moved to approve the minutes from 1/26/2020, Paul Hanson 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried.

Trust Fund & Financial Reports – Jan Wilking moved to accept the Trust Fund and Financial reports, Julie Bever 2nd. Discussion – Ted Hakala briefly spoke to the intent and purpose of the Trust Fund. Motion carried.

Election of Trust Fund Members – Chick Feather has been nominated for the Trust Fund. Three calls for nominations from the floor. None were offered. Nominations closed. Dave Swanson moved to approve Chick Feather for Trust Fund, Andrew Denison 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried.

Election of Nominating Committee – Mike Husak, Ed Skaw and Paul Baribeau will be on Nominating Committee as out going board members. We need two additional names from the floor. Bea Evans nominates Amy Pelle. Amy accepts that nomination. Bun Hanson nominates Audrey Kusilek. Audrey declines the nomination. Laurie Carlson nominates herself. Three calls for nominations from the floor. Nominations are closed. Carol Hakala moved to approve the five nominations for Nominating Committee, Wendy Markgren 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried.

Election of Synod Assembly Representatives – Rick Benson, Joan Benson and Julie Miller have volunteered to serve. Three calls for nominations from the floor. None were offered. Nominations closed. Brad Wiedmann moved to approve the three volunteers for Synod Assembly, Eldon Vrieze 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried. Synod Assembly is April 17, 2021.

Election of Luther Park Representatives – Mackenzie Narins, Laurie Carlsen and Eric Carlsen have volunteered. Three calls for nominations from the floor. None were offered. Nominations closed. Beth Brown moved to accept the three volunteers for Luther Park Annual Meeting, Nancy Vrieze 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried. Luther Park Annual Meeting – Date to be determined

Election of Council Members – Three candidates are printed on your ballot: Wanda Bock, Deberra Slagstad and Dave Myre. After printing, Mackenzie Narins was added, by the Nominating Committee, to the slate of candidates. Three calls for nominations from the floor. None were offered. Ballots were mailed to Bethany member households. Please fill out your ballot and return to Bethany Lutheran Church by Friday 2/5/2021. In the interest of confidentiality, the process was explained during the meeting to please complete your ballot, fold it and put it inside a sealed envelope. Write your name on the outside of the envelope and mail/drop off your ballot to Bethany by Friday. When ballots are counted, the envelopes (with names printed on them) will be compared to the attendance list (as only members present at the annual meeting can vote) to verify that the envelope is from a “present” member. Envelopes will then be opened, ballots will be removed and put into a pile. Once sorting is complete, ballots will then be looked at and counted.

Becoming a Reconciling in Christ Church – Carol Hakala, BIC Task Force member, gave a review of the Task Force’s work and what it means to become a Reconciling in Christ church. The Building an Inclusive Church (BIC) Task Force and the Welcome Committee make the motion that Bethany Church of Rice Lake apply for recognition by ReconcilingWorks to be designated as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) ELCA church. This motion is printed on your ballot. Sam Kochel moved to approve the motion, Dave Swanson 2nd. Discussion – Tom Koser offers a friendly amendment to the motion to postpone the vote until a time when we can safely gather again. After

Minutes of January 31 Annual Meeting (continued)

consultation with our parliamentarian, proper procedure is to postpone indefinitely. Therefore:

Tom Koser moved to postpone, indefinitely, the motion to become a Reconciling in Christ Church. Mike Dierks 2nd. Discussion – Instructions were provided so that persons wishing to comment on the amendment were able to in the virtual/call-in environment. To the best of our ability, all requests to be recognized by the chair were honored. Debate lasted approximately 45 minutes. At conclusion of discussion it was stated: Motion on the floor is to postpone indefinitely, show of hands vote taken with moderator, secretary and president “counting” hands (hand sign on Zoom, physically wave hand on screen, chat box hand). Show of hands vote results in 11 yes, 88 no votes. A roll call vote was requested, and that process was begun. During this lengthy process, a request, by Tom Koser, was made to withdraw his motion. With consultation from our parliamentarian, it was determined that is not an appropriate course of action as we have an active motion on the floor. At this time, the request for a Roll Call vote was withdrawn and the original “hand” votes were used to determine that the motion to postpone failed. With this motion failing, we go back to our previous motion from the BIC Task Force. Discussion – none. Please vote on your paper ballot and results will be communicated early next week once ballots have been counted.

Budget – Bill Evans introduced the budget. In his comments he noted that there has been a change in expenses that occurred after the budget was approved by Council. Ted Hakala moved to approve the 2021 budget, Brad Wiedmann 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried.

Annual Meeting Date & Time – January 30, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. – announcement of annual meeting was made.

Adjournment – Brad Wiedmann moved to adjourn, Wendy Markgren 2nd. Discussion – none. Motion carried.

Closing Prayer – led by Pastor Peter Muschinske.

2/10/2021 Addendum prepared by Jennifer Nelson:

Four Council members met this week to count the ballots. As you many remember, you had to be “present” for our Annual Meeting on Sunday the 31 in order to vote. We had many members who were able to join the meeting via Zoom as well as members who joined by phone. This year’s meeting drew 149 confirmed members...one of our largest turnouts in recent years.

Of those in attendance, 128 sent/handed in their ballots. All four members running for Council positions were elected. The new members are Wanda Bock, Mackenzie Narins, Deb Slagstad and Dave Myre. All were elected to serve a three-year term. Congratulations!

The Building an Inclusive Church’s motion to become a Reconciling in Christ Church also passed with 79% of voters voting in favor of that motion. Thank you to the BIC for all of their hard work on this effort.

Minutes of Special Congregation Meeting

September 19, 2021 - 11:00 a.m.

Meeting was held Hybrid: Participants were in-person in the Sanctuary as well as via Zoom

Meeting Minutes taken by Mackenzie Narins

Call to Order: Leah reported that all Zoom participants had been admitted virtually. Pam called the special meeting to order.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Peter began with an opening prayer.

Declaration of a Quorum: Pam called for attendance numbers: Leah confirms 52 voting members present on Zoom. Alexa counted more than 100 people in the Nave. We have met our quorum of 94. Quorum is present. Official count was 174.

Pam stated the Purpose of the Special Meeting of the Congregation was to Call Reverend Arthur Bergren as Lead Pastor to Bethany Lutheran Church, Rice Lake.

Carol Hakala, Call Committee chairperson began with some history/notes from the Call Committee: The Transition Task Force put together a report following their work in the summer/fall of 2020. In February of 2021 the Call Committee was formed and began working together. The eight members of the Call Committee were introduced. The first task of the CC was to put together a Ministry Site Profile. This was completed and accepted in April 2021. Next, the CC was given two candidates to interview. After initial interviews with both candidates, the CC was unanimous in wanting a second interview with Pastor Arthur.

Pastor Arthur introduced himself (via video, pre-recorded) to Bethany along with his wife, Jennifer.

Laura Doeberiner and Kevin Jacobson, both members of the CC, spoke to their experiences with and feelings toward Pastor Arthur and commented on the CCs unanimous decision to move forward in offering the Call to Pastor Arthur.

Pam reviewed the compensation package: \$124,078-Salary, housing, and benefits. The council has approved this package.

Recommendation of the Congregation Council:

Motion to extend a Call to Pastor Arthur Bergren as Lead Pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church. Ted Hakala, 2nd by Bun Hanson - discussion: Question: We had a second pastor previously, could you give us a dollar amount with both pastors? Joe Erickson responded that an Associate pastor is around \$85,000. Question: Not here to dispute Pastor Arthur but her concern is that Pastor Arthur be made aware of the division caused by the RIC vote and what he could be facing if he comes to Bethany. Carol Hakala responded that Pastor Arthur Bergren does know about the division in Bethany and realizes there is work to be done to bring the congregation together. Question: Why is Pastor Arthur seeking a new call. Carol Hakala responded: There has been some challenges at the church school due to the pandemic. Pastor Arthur believes that new leadership is needed, especially at the church school.

The vote was then conducted. Zoom participants had an anonymous poll vote through Zoom that was tabulated by Leah. In-person attendees were given paper ballots to vote. Council reps collected the anonymous paper ballots and tabulated those results.

While votes were being counted, Pam thanked the transition task force, the call committee, the council and Pastor Peter.

A total of 174 votes were cast. The result was 96% YES (167 people voted YES) to Pastor Bergren. 4% voted against (7 people voted against)

The motion carried.

Immediately after the meeting Pam called Pastor Bergren.

Andy Denison thanked Pam Crouse.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

President's Report

"Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given." --John 1:16

Yesterday I read a meditation written by Kurt Jacobson, whom many of you know. His words about God's gift of grace upon grace (upon grace, upon grace, upon grace...) made me think about the year 2021 at Bethany.

Bethany Lutheran Church in Rice Lake is a building in which people with the biggest hearts, compassion, love and generosity gather to worship and serve the Lord. I have been privileged to serve as Council President to witness God's gift of a never-ending stream of grace upon grace being manifest through you.

In this 2021 Annual Report, you will find reports from Pastor Arthur Bergren, committees, staff and others describing their year's activities that have kept the mission of Bethany alive, ***We INVITE all; We GROW in faith; We GO to share God's love and grace.*** Notice the abundance of gifts that have been bestowed upon us through the service and talents of all these sinner/saints.

Your elected Councilpersons worked hard on your behalf this year. We were blessed to have Pastor Peter Muschinske lead us as we completed a call process and celebrated the arrival of Pastor Arthur Bergren. We learned more about what it means to be a Reconciling in Christ ELCA church with the feedback and discussions that we held with you, the congregation. With the help of a "Covid" task force, we navigated through challenging decisions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. We carefully reviewed our budget with unexpected variances in our expenses and income, and planned a new budget to assure our core mission continues for 2022 and beyond. Some other special notes about this year;

- Pastor Peter Muschinske completed his service to Bethany as a transition pastor in October.
- We said farewell to Pastor Luci Sesvold so she could move with her family to SE Wisconsin.
- In September, the work of the Transition Task Force and the Call Committee culminated in a congregational vote to call Pastor Arthur Bergren to be lead pastor at Bethany. He accepted and arrived in November. We have been blessed to have someone with his experience and skills. (If you haven't yet met him, I hope you will soon.)
- We are grateful to all those who provided feedback and encouragement throughout this year.
- We were blessed by the creativity of many who brought us together for fun, worship and service. Events such as Music Under the Tent, Family Events, Rally Sunday and the Children's Christmas Program (*The Friendly Beasts*) were extraordinarily creative and joyful.
- The Council demonstrated their commitment to the congregation by their excellent attendance at not only the monthly Council meetings, but the many special meetings held this year.

Finally, I would like to extend a special thank you to the staff: Dawn Paul, Angie Buchli, Amy Brekke, Leah Hullinger and Amanda Baker for their creativity and flexibility in redesigning processes, programs, communication tools and worship to keep the Bethany mission alive and moving forward.

Together, we faced challenges we've not faced before in our lifetimes as well as the age-old challenges that this human organization must always endure.

The year 2021 for us, the people of Bethany, may be characterized in many ways, but I choose to think of it as a year in which we searched for who we were as a congregation and what we are called to do by God. We learned about each other, and in so doing, may have begun to develop a new vision of "Bethany" people as faithful, challenged yet unified in our diversity, but always capable of doing God's work in amazing ways. I pray we can remain mindful of our gift of grace, upon grace, upon grace...

Peace,
Pam Crouse

Interim Pastor - Rev. Peter K. Muschinske

My last day of interim service was Reformation Sunday, “All Hallow’s Eve,” times still marked by the Covid-19 virus and effects of the global pandemic. Yet, we have been “sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ...forever (From our baptismal liturgy).” While people everywhere have suffered in many ways, Bethany has moved through an interim period and is emerging with hope for the next most faithful and Spirit-led movement. My comments will be organized around five key tasks commonly addressed by an interim and congregation during such a time as this.

Denominational linkage: This may be the single-most significant task/opportunity/challenge of this season in the life of Bethany. The theological tradition of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, carefully and prayerfully (C & P) stands in the midst of the world rooted in the grace of Christ. Our “polity” (organizational structure) is like three intersecting circles: Churchwide, Synod and Congregation. This is not a pyramid with a Presiding Bishop (or national office) who dictates local practices nor a Synodical Bishop who assigns clergy or demands money or anything from the congregation. Our theology—and that of our predecessor bodies (primarily former American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America)—has a theological lens that for decades has wrestled with and re-examined the Biblical texts that informed the Church of generations ago. This is in keeping with a theme of the Protestant Reformation, of which Martin Luther (d. 1546) was a key leader, was *Semper Reformanda* (“always reforming”). And while nothing is “demanded,” the three expressions of “Church” mean the invitation to live out our faith active in love of neighbor.

The ELCA has, through predecessor bodies, ordained women since 1970. There have, for decades, been social statements demonstrating God’s rule (reign) as it intersects with public life (Christian ethics) regarding matters such as poverty, creation care (environment), race relations and policies and war. We, in our tradition, have C & P studied scriptures and recognized that while many modern issues are not specifically addressed in the Bible, Christians must act by every available means to further God’s will on earth. This theological legacy allows for—and really, undergirds—positions that Bethany has taken from Covid caution to becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation raising a new awareness of what it means to be a part of the ELCA. Our “denominational linkages” (as our Fall Stewardship campaign highlighted) means our acts of “Neighbor love” span from the city of Rice Lake, to the reaches of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin to the nation and world, through global participation and pan-Lutheran agencies such as Lutheran World Relief.

Commitment to new leadership and directions: Several leaders have departed (death or transfer), a few have indicated to me that they would withhold any financial contributions due to a cautionary approach to Covid or an understanding of Jesus and his priorities which is at variance with their understanding. Most of the membership transfers I signed were to more conserving traditions, Missouri and Wisconsin Synod. And all were willing to talk to me about their decision. While I, as a pastor and practitioner of the Christ-tradition see and affirm those who after serious C & P contemplation have determined that they can best exercise their discipleship in another tradition, some perceived this as a “lack of care.” It was quite the opposite. Given how difficult it was for these to make this choice, it is exactly “care” that causes me to bless them in their chosen direction, which for them is also “toward (the) God” they know and love enough to leave behind friends and years of beloved traditions and Bethany practices. Since before my arrival and during my interim, the Spirit has inspired and raised up other leaders to what is a difficult work in any interim, with exacerbated challenges during a pandemic and with other changes.

History: The history of the congregation is one I know well. It is a history of beloved, baptized children of God, saint-sinners seeking to serve and engage in the perpetual struggle of bringing a Christ-lens to exercising their faith in congregation, home and society.

Leadership power shifts: “Be careful what you pray for!” Which is to say, (and to pray, as I did near the end of my interim, meeting with nearly-confirmed children of God, that the Spirit inspire them, ignite courage to step out with a faith active in love), the Spirit may answer in surprising ways. When leadership groups have new people

Interim Pastor (continued)

(which in a fairly stable community like Bethany might mean someone who has been around the church fewer than 10 or 15 years), some with a longer history may grieve and come to grips (or not) with life's most difficult—even existential—challenges. Yet here is a congregation that vows to “Grow young” and I am excited by the commitment of confirmation students and have seen some young people quite energized by the prospects of the broad embrace of the full welcome of Jesus Christ in the RIC concluding vote. This is at the same time exciting and very challenging. Who has wrestled with assumptions or conclusions reached by former generations? All of us. A faith analogous to the renting of an automobile is not authentic, literally not “owned” by the person. Disciples of Jesus Christ, washed in the waters of baptismal grace, live out the Spirit's call in the complexity of faith and other communities. I remember with thanksgiving those who stepped up to serve during times like these.

New Identity: There was not a lot of impetus for fashioning a “new identity” but between Covid adaptations and the culmination of the RIC process, identity discernment and delineation is upon the church de facto. Keep in mind Jeremiah 29, “¹¹For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹²Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.” Count on God's good future; and I continue to pray for the congregation and Christ's Church.

This interim was rich with meaning about God and God's people. I have seen committed Christians—of all ages—rise up to engage with acts of gracious speech and generous actions. This interim period has also been an exceptional time of having my integrity and core theological values questioned. This is part of the Protestant legacy and means it has been a time of serious self-reflection and insight. The Spirit has regularly elicited empathy and lament from deep within: you are people I know, love and cherish. I grieve circumstances of a divided society and rejoice in occasions where some common ground in Christ has shored up our capability to continue to love even when we “agree to disagree agreeably.” Ephesians 4 provides this hopeful injunction: “¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.” It was a privilege to partner with you during this time and to recognize our shared work that is to come as the body of Christ.

In the love of Jesus Christ,

Peter K. Muschinske

Interim pastor, 10/1/20-10/31/21

Lead Pastor - Rev. Dr. Arthur C. Bergren

In my first few months, I have uncovered some difficult news to share and to learn about. Our current financial situation is troubling. Leadership is projecting a \$100,000 deficit for fiscal year 2022 according year end numbers. This deficit can be covered by non-designated funds for this year. If the deficit cannot be corrected on the income side for 2022, then it will be corrected on the expense side for 2023. Simply put, this means changes in Bethany's model of ministry.

As I have been able to discern through conversation and prayer, this financial change has much to do with congregational conflict. Bethany throughout 2021 has disagreed on a whole variety of matters, primarily on mask wearing and the vote to become a Reconciled in Christ parish. I see two possible outcomes.

The first outcome is we continue in our conflicts. We focus on what divides us. We keep the tensions going until one side or the other wins out. Under this scenario, this is where everyone loses. Then, Bethany heads into a future where money drives every decision and struggles with maintaining an expensive building.

The second outcome is to focus upon healing, forgiveness and love. This is a place of compromise, agreeing to disagree without being disagreeable and respecting our differences. Under this scenario, this is where we stabilize our membership, prepare for the end of the pandemic and ready ourselves for growth.

In political language, we speak of blue states as being liberal and red states as being conservative. In areas of our country where blue and red exist side by side, we identify them as being purple. I pledge to the full membership of Bethany that I dedicate myself to the task of creating a purple church.

Unity is a choice we can make together. Let's lock our arms together and move into Bethany's best possible future. Let's figure this out together. Let's begin this very hour.

The center of our faith is Christ crucified, Christ risen. When Jesus died, God entered into all the hard things of this lifetime. Martin Luther listed them as sin, death and evil. When Jesus rose from the grave, life, forgiveness and salvation radiated out on that first Easter. God has been with Bethany in the conflicts. Now God is ready to lead Bethany to a new day.

I am grateful to serve with a team orientated and talented group of souls on staff. They work so very hard and so very well together. I am honored to serve with them. I am equally grateful to serve with our council. They are supportive, honest and helpful as we tend to the ministry of Bethany. I encourage the entire membership of Bethany to thank our staff and council for their faithfulness.

Lastly, I give thanks to God for my wife, Jennifer. Her support, care and love strengthens me to serve you. She is God's blessing in my life.

Pr. Arthur

Visitation Pastor - Rev. Sue Eidahl

Dear Bethany Congregation,

2021 – What a year of changes it has been! I don't think anyone could have told me when the calendar turned over last January to 2021, what kind of year I was in for. Saying good-bye to a congregation I served for 23 years was incredibly difficult. So many memories of ministry together still float through my mind. I am truly grateful for all that I learned during that time.

Moving back to Rice Lake as a retired Pastor found me reflecting on the many blessings God continues to send my way. And wouldn't you know it, God has blessed me again. I immediately had a faith community to join for worship and ministry. You went out of your way to welcome me "back" to Bethany. I can't begin to tell you how that touched my heart. When Pastor Arthur encouraged me to join the staff as a visitation pastor, I was ready. So here we are Bethany, doing ministry together again. Holy Disruption. Holy Opportunities. These two phrases capture what 2021 is in my life and the life of Bethany.

The year 2021 was another year that tested our faith, persistence, tenacity and resiliency. It forced us to think in innovative ways as our normal routines continued to change. Most of us continued to work longer hours, even though we worked from home. Parents found themselves juggling the demands of work, home life and at-home schooling as they managed the needs to keep their families safe. I'm most impressed by teachers, school administrators, healthcare workers and frontline employees who stepped up to establish a new normal and keep our communities healthy. We owe them a great deal of gratitude and appreciation.

In the middle of all of that, you as a congregation, spent time studying and searching for God's direction for Bethany. And wouldn't you know it, God blessed Bethany with a gifted lead pastor to move us through and beyond this crazy pandemic time. It is a true privilege to work beside Pastor Arthur and all of the gifts he brings to Bethany.

Although I've only been on staff a couple of months, I am so grateful for each member of the staff. We are truly a ministry team, working together to see that mission and ministry happens in this place and at this time.

I'm grateful for you, your faithful giving, the ways you show up in worship and for one another and your continued focus that others know the light and love of Jesus, through your care and concern. These are the historic values of our church, forged after years of gathering around the cross, water, wine and bread while remembering that nothing – not even a pandemic – will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

May the Lord grant you peace and health in this new year!

Interim Director of Worship, Music & Member Engagement Amy Brekke

Dear Bethany Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve our Lord, Jesus Christ, through the ministries and life of Bethany Lutheran Church. My love and commitment for God and this congregation grow stronger as I observe and experience the good works of His people occurring in the lives of others here and throughout the world.

In response to the resignation of the Associate Pastor, the Interim Lead Pastor and church council asked if I would consider a full-time position. On May 15, 2021, I signed a six-month contract as Director of Worship, Music, and Member Engagement. This contract was extended through February 15, 2022. My responsibilities for

Interim Director of Worship, Music & Member Engagement (continued)

member engagement include, but are not limited to, support and fulfillment of assignments from Bethany's pastors, ministries outside the realm of worship and music, and volunteer/member recruitment. Currently, worship planning and implementation constitute 40% of my work week; music ministry 35%, and member engagement 25%.

Ministry during a pandemic has been and continues to present many challenges. I would like to thank this Bethany family and all the volunteers for your hard work, prayers, love, support, and help in keeping the light of Christ burning in and outside these walls.

WORSHIP MINISTRY: Bethany offers in-person and virtual worship services. Working together to keep everyone safe, we have implemented a Temporary Worship Schedule. This schedule offers two worship services (8:00 & 9:30 a.m.) with masks *required* in the Sanctuary as well as an additional late service (11:00 a.m.) with masks *recommended* in the Sanctuary and CrossTalk/Coffee Time (9:00 a.m.) with masks *recommended* in the Gathering Room. Over the past year in response to the pandemic, the staff and volunteers worked to provide safe ways to gather including drive-in services, outdoor in-person worship services (under the tent), expansion of streaming to Facebook and, as in the past and will continue to offer, broadcasting through radio, local cable television and Bethany's website.

MUSIC MINISTRY: How we do music these past two years has been much different than what we are used to. Many of the programs were suspended. In September, singing returned to worship, both adult bell choirs resumed rehearsals, as did Bethany's Sunday School Kid's Choir. **Thank you** to all the faithful musicians that contributed to leading worship whether it was recorded, outdoors, or in person. Special Concerts/Programs offered at Bethany in 2021:

The majority of Bethany's Music Ministry, excluding salaries, is funded through the generous donations and memorials of the congregation. Thank you!

- VBS Closing Program
- Outdoor Middle School Bell Camp
- Red Cedar Symphony Orchestra
- Northwinds British Brass
- Sunday School Christmas Program

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT: The goal of the ministry staff is to help members find ways to serve within the congregation and create events in which the congregation participates in growing faith, service and fellowship.

- Congregation Lent Devotional
- Summer Music Concerts Under-the-Tent
- Bethany On-the-Go Farm~Airport~Park
- 25 volunteers participated in the Aquafest Parade
- Thanksgiving Food Offering
- ELCA World Hunger Awareness & Action Campaign

COMMITTEES:

Currently, I serve as the staff representative on Worship & Music, Mission Concerns, Safely Regather Task Force and Pavilion Project. Please see the respective reports for their activities throughout the year.

It is no doubt we have had our share of struggles, but I have great hope in the future that we will build our faith, our church, our community and each other as we share the Good News with the world.

In God's service,
Amy Brekke

Director of Education, Youth & Congregational Ministries

Angie Buchli

Education, Youth and Congregational Ministries are an integral part of Bethany. Our mission at Bethany is to promote discipleship through education, relationship building, fellowship and service. We strive to make Christ known to all and to raise up disciples. We want to invite everyone to “Come and See” as in John 1:39, when Jesus invites his disciples to know him by witnessing for themselves his active presence in the world. We want to foster faith formation by making sure all receive that invitation to “Come and See”, to experience and learn about Jesus’ love for everyone and his light in the world, to become a part of Bethany and feel they are important and valued, and then equip them to go out and share that love with the world.

This past year has definitely continued to stretch us in the ways we look at and do ministry. Due to Covid, there is a constant learning curve to what works well and what does not. We are continually looking for creative ways to connect with our Bethany family so that we can offer helpful and meaningful resources during this time. Education, youth and congregational ministry at Bethany takes much more than just the staff to carry it out. We would not be able have our many education, youth and congregational ministry opportunities without the wonderful Education Team and our host of amazing volunteers. A huge thank you to all of our Education Team members, ushers, greeters, worship assistant, Sunday School teachers, Here We Stand Guides, Club 9 mentors, Vacation Bible School leaders and guides, bus drivers and chaperones and more! We greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity of your time! Thanks to these volunteers, Bethany is able to offer and support many opportunities for Christian education, youth and congregational ministries, and service opportunities.

Infants and Toddlers

- Nursery - The nursery was not staffed this year due to Covid. It is open for families to use.
- Baptism - All infants baptized at Bethany receive a Frolic First Bible board book.
- Bethany Tots - Bethany Tots is open to parents with children age newborn through 3 years and equips parents for teaching faith at home through group discussions, activities, crafts and games. For spring 2021, Frolic lessons were adapted for parents to pick up and do at home with their tots. We are hoping to resume Bethany Tots the spring of 2022.

Elementary Youth (Preschool through Grade 5)

- Sunday School - Sunday school classes are offered for students ages 3-5th grade. For the first semester of 2021, Sunday school continued to be online lessons for families to do at home. In person Sunday school resumed this fall. The students worked hard on lessons and the Christmas program. They did an amazing job!
- Vacation Bible School - Bug Safari VBS was July 19-22 from 5:30-7:15 p.m. and began with a supper for families at 5:00 p.m. We had an awesome week at Bug Safari VBS, where kids caught the BUZZ about God’s love! A huge thank you to all of the VBS volunteers!
- Bible Sunday - On Sunday, October 13, 2021, we presented Spark Story Bibles to all of our Kindergarten students. Confirmation students in 6th grade were presented a Here We Stand Bible at the start of confirmation.
- First Communion - First Communion classes were offered in March/April 2021 with a celebration of the first communion milestone on Sunday, April 18, 2021. These special classes are designed to support ongoing learning by exploring the stories, rituals and images of this meal.

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

- Here We Stand - Our confirmation ministry for 6th-8th grade students met via Zoom Wednesdays during the 2021 spring semester from 5:00-6:00 pm. This fall, we resumed in-person HWS class from 6:00-7:00 p.m. They are currently studying the New Testament.

High School (Grades 9-12)

- High School Youth Group/Bible Study - Since Covid, students have not been interested in meeting via Zoom. Youth group will resume in person in January 2022.
- Synod Youth Board - The Synod Youth Board (SYB) is an organization of high school youth elected from each conference within the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and plans Godstock (high school youth gathering) and Christ Jam (middle school gathering). Bethany has people on the SYB. Jonathan Nelson just finished his term as SYB President. Sarah Buchli just finished her term as SYB Secretary. Emma Panasuk completed her term as conference representative. I continue as the adult rep for our conference. Jan Wilking continues as the confer-

Director of Education, Youth & Congregational Ministries

(continued)

ence adult alternate. This is a wonderful opportunity for our youth to gain valuable and useful leadership skills. They also form friendships with other youth and adults from all over our synod.

- Club 9 - Confirmation students in 9th grade and their mentors meet one Sunday a month during the school year. Students and mentors explore their faith and the seven promises the 9th graders will affirm at confirmation.
- Confirmation - We celebrated two Affirmation of Baptisms in 2021. Due to Covid, our 2020 Affirmation of Baptism celebration was postponed from Reformation Sunday to Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021, so that we could celebrate in person with families and as a congregation. This fall our 10th grade class completed their review, conversations with pastor, faith statements and celebrated their Affirmation of Baptism on Reformation Sunday, October 31, 2021.
- Baccalaureate - We honored our 2021 high school seniors on Sunday, May 16, 2021. Seniors received an embroidered fleece blanket from WELCA and their bags with messages from the congregation.
- French Fry Booth - Bethany's French Fry Booth at the Barron County Fair was a great success again this year! We went through almost 2000 pounds of potatoes, had 60+ volunteers with more than 250 hours of volunteer time. All proceeds go to the high school youth gathering and mission trip fund. A huge thank you to the Dennis & Sue West family who donated all of our Kitchen Kleen potatoes! Thank you everyone who worked a shift and helped clean the booth before and after the fair!
- 2022 ELCA National Youth Gathering - I am working to prepare for the youth gathering next summer. Students completing grades 8-12 in 2022 are eligible to attend. We currently have a group of seven students and four adults going. I am looking forward to working with this group and planning for this event! I will be attending the ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza (known as the E!) in February for amazing continuing education and valuable insight into the Youth Gathering.

Congregational Ministries

We are continually looking for innovative ways we can enhance congregational involvement and connect with our Bethany family. Some ways we have done this during Covid are:

- Lent-in-a-Box - At home Lent resources for all ages.
- Easter Pop Up Paint Party - Roger Britton taught a paint class during Holy Week.
- Easter Cake Decorating Contest - We supplied cake and decorating supplies and asked for Easter or spring themed cakes. Cakes and winners were shared on our Facebook page.
- Flat Jesus - Flat Jesus was back this summer to travel around with Bethany families. It was fun to see all of Flat Jesus' adventures.
- Rally Sunday - Cross+generational event kicking off our fall semester. We gathered at Mommsen's Harvest Hills Pumpkin Patch on Sunday, September 12, 2021 for breakfast, worship, blessing of backpacks and Pumpkin Patch fun.
- Fall Fest - Cross+generational event on Bethany's green space on Sunday, October 24, 2021. Everyone gathered for worship followed by a fun-filled celebration including lunch, fellowship, caramel apple bar, pumpkin decorating and games.
- Prepare Ye - Cross+generational event on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 that included worship, decorating the church, God's Global Barnyard Fair, Advent-at-Home resources, crafts, fellowship and fun.
- Children's Messages - I recorded children's messages for Sunday worship beginning in fall of 2020 and continued through fall of 2021.
- College Student Care Packages - Each year we send our college students something to let them know that their church family is thinking of them. Addresses are requested each year. This year, students received a card signed by the Bethany staff and a gift card from Bethany.

As always, it is both a pleasure and privilege to work with our congregation. It is my hope that education, youth and congregational ministries at Bethany provides opportunities for everyone to deepen and strengthen their relationship with God and each other so that they may grow in grace, faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Thank you for all of the thoughtfulness and generosity that has been given in support of education, youth and congregational ministries at Bethany. Without that we would not be able to equip people to shine God's light into the world.

Director of Church Business - Dawn Paul

The Director of Church Business provides leadership for all business functions, supervision of communications & publications specialist, cleaner, financial secretaries and kitchen coordinator, delegation of responsibilities and direct work associated with the daily business activities. Accordingly, the Director of Church Business:

- Manages and is directly responsible for all financial operations including payroll, accounts payable/receivable, financial reporting, etc.
- Works effectively with community business representatives and vendors to ensure quality business relationships.
- Researches, develops and initiates innovative and efficient business practices.
- Coordinates and oversees all property maintenance issues, effectively collaborates with the Property committee and attends their monthly meetings.

A lot of my job is answering questions and reporting data for members and committees. Some days I spend most of the day on the phone with contractors getting bids for various jobs, coordinating things, proofing others work or ordering supplies, equipment, etc. that are needed in and around all areas of the building. This can be anything from communion supplies, salt for the sidewalks, computers, paper, replacing light ballasts, dishwasher soap, new flooring, to toilet tissue for the restrooms. I also enter weekly contributions, send quarterly statements and keep approximately 1200 member files up to date with personal information and life events.

At the end of each month, I balance the books then run monthly financial reports: Balance Sheet, Budgeted Financial Statement, Designated Funds Report, etc. and send them along with committee reports in the council packets. I also attend council meetings, to hopefully answer any questions council may have.

I serve as a staff representative on the Property Management Committee, Finance Committee and the Safely Regathering Task Force.

My job entails so many behind the scenes duties that it would be difficult to list everything I've done in 2021.

Here are a few highlights:

January is my busiest, most hectic month of the year. Closing the current year books, working on the new year's budget, annual report, contribution statements, filing year end reports, W2s, 1099s, financial reports, etc. plus managing my daily workload.

It was decided that it was time to freshen up the inside of the church before reopening the doors. I met with local painters in January, evaluated rooms with the Property Committee, then the proposal went to council. Most rooms hadn't been painted since our 2005 addition, so it was definitely needed. When the painting was complete, I had Service Master also clean all of our upholstered furniture.

The ELCA Annual Report is due by February 15, each year. Pulling all of the data and information from various locations to complete this report is always time consuming.

June and July were filled with compiling records for and meeting with Mike Bock for the financials audit.

After meeting with the Welcome Team, I updated the language used in the Wedding Guidelines brochure. We even had an August wedding at Bethany. I met with the couple to coordinate their wedding plans, lots of follow up calls and emails, created and printed their bulletins, met with the bride for final prep then conducted their wedding rehearsal.

Our postage meter was no longer IMI compliant and needed to be replaced, but I was able to lease a new machine for less than what we were paying for the old one.

We were receiving phone calls day and night on a regular basis from our Fire Alarm Monitoring Service for connection failures. After many conversations and troubleshooting with ESC, it was decided that it was because of our old analog system. I ordered a new cell transmitter unit in August and it was finally installed in October. No

Director of Church Business (*continued*)

more night and weekend phone calls.

October and November were busy transitioning from Pastor Peter to Pastor Arthur and all of the paperwork that entails. Then in December, we welcomed Pastor Sue.

October was busy with Commitment Cards and letters to members for the October 24 Commitment Sunday. Then November and December were confirming commitments, inputting pledges into our system and setting up and changing electronic giving for 2022.

In September, I mailed Ministry Spending Plan worksheets to all committees, so they could get it on their October agendas and return to me in time to enter budget requests. I Met with the finance committee in November and worked on the 2022 Proposed Budget, to present to council. Then came more meetings and multiple revisions on the Proposed Budget before the Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn Paul

Property Management Committee

The Property Committee has had another busy year. The committee very much enjoys coming together using our diverse talents to serve the church. We completed a total of (14) projects for the year.

We are very pleased, to have Ric Brekke as a new member! Present members are, Shirley Bergthold, Dave Jacobs, Joel Kohlmeyer, Lynn Koob, Wendy Markgren, Dave Myre, Eric Roethel, Josh Weinstock.

It has been an honor to serve as the Property Committee Chair. the past (20) months. It should be noted that April 1st will be the end of my (2) year term. A replacement will need to be identified so we can have a smooth transition. [I do wish to stay on the committee as an active member going forward.]

Major accomplishments for 2021 were: interior painting, parking lot repair, updating the alarm Enunciator from analog to digital technology (eliminating chronic errors with the alarm system) and the sanctuary pews were refinished.

Items to be reviewed in 2021:

1. Lawn Tractor: Possible replacement
2. Outside Steps: Steps on the Wilson Ave. side that have sunken
3. Balcony Railing: The plating has been polished through to the base layer, over the years.
4. Interior Walls: Some plaster repair is needed in the older part of the church, such as, the balcony stairwells.
5. Parking Lot: Ongoing repair
6. Retaining Wall: Repainting of the low wall located on the Messenger Street side.
7. Garage Door: Repair or replacement decision.
8. Lawn Maintenance: Weed control

Activities for the month of December 2021:

1. Bell Table Mobility: Retractable casters were installed on the table used for the large bells. Sonja Wilson has reported; that it is way easier to move the bells back and forth from the bell room to the sanctuary compared to using the glider-pads, as before. The Bell Choir very much appreciates what was done.
2. Planter Urn: The dilapidated large urn that was by the carport, has been removed. This cleared the center of the garden area for new possibilities and has improved the entry way appearance. Thanks to Lynn Koob.
3. Garage Door: It was made known by the staff, that one side of the large double folding garage door was almost impossible to open. A large “gate caster” wheel was installed to help the door get up over the frost heaved floor reducing most of the drag resistance. It Is about 80% improved. In the Spring we will revisit it. Thanks to Dave Myre and Joel Kohlmeyer
4. Carport Verticals: A church member asked if the chimney looking features on each end of the carport roof ridge were supposed to look the same? (One has a capstone; the other was without one.) Dave Wilson flew his drone over the carport to inspect them and sent us a video to review. In addition, Dave Myre studied the architectural drawings. It was determined that they are “as designed” and no repair is needed. Thank you, Dave Myre and Dave Wilson.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Moffatt, Chairperson

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee typically consists of four members: three congregation lay leaders plus the council representative (vice president). The committee met monthly via Zoom, usually the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Starting January 2022, the meetings are scheduled on the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. to accommodate Pastor Arthur's schedule. It's important for Pastor Arthur to be able to attend and be part of this committee. The committee currently has two congregation lay members, and will have a new council representative. Personnel needs to add at least two new committee members during 2022.

Term limits beginning January 1, 2022 are:

- Jolene Anderson - 3 years ended December 2021. She has agreed to extend her membership for (at least) the 2022 calendar year. Thank you Jolene!
- Gary Chilson - 3 years - ending December 2022 (extended Chair position for 2022)
- Lori Bowman - 3 years (resigned November 2021)

These are our key accomplishments in 2021:

- Updated the job description for Director of Music, Worship and Member Engagement, (moved from part-time to full-time)
- Reviewed staff Performance Appraisal format and recommended that the Handbook reflect that annual appraisals should be completed by August 31 of each year. This will change under Pastor Arthur's direction. Pastor Arthur utilizes a goal-based appraisal process, and he will conduct the appraisals at the beginning of each year.
- Continued review and update of Employee Handbook, (specific attention) to harassment and grievance claims response procedures.
- Made recommendations for in-office work schedule for the Director of Church Business.
- Developed and submitted Telecommuting guidelines and employee agreement procedures.
- Made staff salary recommendations for annual budget considerations.
- Participated in an exit interview with Interim Pastor Peter.

The Personnel Committee's overall responsibility is to support the church staff.

In addition, the Personnel Committee is responsible for the following tasks:

- Develops and recommends to the Council personnel policy and practice, with input from the Pastor.
- Reviews and updates personnel handbook annually.
- Assists with development of position descriptions and makes recommendations to the Council as appropriate.
- Assists to identify legal issues and works with Council to address those issues.
- Develops and recommends grievance process/procedures to the Council and acts as a resource to ensure that the process is followed.
- Regularly reviews salary and compensation in light of both job requirements and local market place realities, cost of living changes, inflation, etc.

Home Communion

The home communion ministry at Bethany is an outreach to members when temporary or permanent limitations prevent attending worship services. Volunteers visit and bring communion to their homes, assisted living facilities or nursing homes.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, these visits continued to be put on hold. Phone calls and sending of cards helped to stay in contact as much as possible. In late spring, for those who felt comfortable, the visits started to resume where possible.

If you would be willing to help with this ministry or would like to receive home communion, please contact the church office or coordinators, Paulette Hanson at 715-234-4919 or Monica Berkseth at 715-205-2805.

Green Team

We applied for and received a \$1,500 “Open Doors” grant from the ELCA. We will use this grant to purchase reusable shopping bags with the Bethany logo on them and with Bethany information inside of them. We plan to distribute them to new members and at public gatherings such as farmers markets and our Wednesday outdoor gatherings.

We continue to collect multiple items for recycling. We have received over \$300 for recycled computer ink cartridges. We have recycled over 100 pounds of used batteries (AA, AAA, C, D and 9 volt only). We are now collecting used hearing aid batteries in a separate box. We are continuing to collect used gently worn shoes, used denim in any condition (this is used to make insulation but must be at least 90% cotton), and used wine corks (true cork and not synthetic).

Thank you for recycling both at home and at church. Remember that reusing items when appropriate and reducing use of disposable items is even better than recycling.

Lynn Koob, Eldon Vrieze, Cindy Nymo, Don Storm, Kathy Lehman, Wanda Bock

Stewardship Committee

The 2021 Stewardship theme was *Every gift from heaven...Together we are a blessing*. The Stewardship team continued monthly Zoom meetings this year. The Covid pandemic has again challenged all aspects of our lives as well as our church life. Our Safely Regathering Task Force has constantly monitored the county and local situation to give us their best advice. However, in person attendance, like last year, is down from average. Our live stream and radio listenership is solid. We ended 2021 with giving below budget and actual expenses. Our pledges to date for 2022 are slightly behind last year. Updated financial information is in the annual report. We thank those who have made a pledge for the new year and to those who continue to support Bethany financially throughout the year. We need every member to consider their faithful financial giving to Bethany.

Kevin Jacobson, Chair

Reaching Out

Bethany's Reaching Out helps to organize and serve funeral luncheons. This year because of COVID restrictions we only served one funeral in August. We served the meal outside under the big white tent. We had to think OUTSIDE the box as far as preparing a meal and serving it. We did it! We came up with a lunch INSIDE a box. It turned out great and everyone was happy! This is a wonderful ministry provided by Bethany Lutheran Church.

Reaching Out is spearheaded by Gail Weber, Sue Finstad and Annette Messner.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gail Weber

Worship and Music

Committee Members: Pastor Arthur, Amy Brekke, Tammy Roberg, Deb Slagstad, Con Eastwold, Carol Sevals, Julie Stephens, Andy Denison, Jan Wick, Bun Hanson, Paul Hanson

The purpose of the Worship and Music Committee is to provide music and worship opportunities to and for our congregation and community that will enhance their relationship with God, their family and their fellow community members through a variety of music and worship service opportunities.

Throughout the 2021 year, we have had to continue to make creative changes in worship as the Covid pandemic continues to be a health concern. With the improvements in the health system, we are at a time where we can begin to plan for a more open environment and look forward to additional activities and opportunities for us to come together and worship.

Our staff has continued to work closely with congregation members to provide worship opportunities and activities through streaming, radio broadcast, Facebook, TV and outdoor live worship services. Many of the services are archived and available on Bethany's website for 90 days for all to view at their convenience. Below are listed the worship opportunities and worship supports that have been developed throughout this year.

- Streaming, Facebook and archiving worship services
- Special services such as Christmas, Easter, All Saints Sunday
- Updating banners and music filing system
- Outdoor Wednesday evening Worship Under the Tent activities for the months of June-October
- Sunday morning services: 8:00 a.m. (radio, TV, Facebook, streaming, archived)
- Establishing a Task Force to begin researching an effective way to develop the Green Space
- Begin streaming the 10:00 a.m. Sunday morning worship service.
- Committee meetings conducted through Zoom (Internet meeting program)
- Upgrade video equipment for broadcasting worship through social media

The Worship and Music Committee would like to extend a sincere thank you to our staff (Pastoral, Worship & Music Director, Office Staff, Education Director) and the many congregation members who have given extra time, creativity and energy to develop and provide worship opportunities throughout the 2021 year. It is through their continued faithful work and support that worship opportunities are continued as we faithfully await the time when we can again safely gather together.

Blessings to Everyone!

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul Hanson, Worship and Music Chairperson

Mission Concerns

MEMBERS: Carol Kohlmeyer, Shirley Peterson, Judy Jacobs, Joan Gerland, Pauli Storm, Deb Stange, Bill Evans (council representative) and Amy Brekke (staff rep)

NOISY COLLECTIONS: August Noisy Collection for Mission Jamaica totaled \$282.43.

MISSION JAMAICA: Due to the travel restrictions, we were not able to make a visit in 2021. A collection was held and we were able to send two 70-gallon barrels filled with supplies to the orphanage.

LUNCH BOX: Organizers, Carol Kohlmeyer and Judy Jacobs continue to schedule volunteers to provide lunches every Tuesday. Though they cannot meet inside, they have kept this ministry going by providing bagged lunches every Tuesday. Cars drive up to the door and volunteers hand lunches through the car windows. Attendees are still varied in amounts each week – anywhere from 8 people to 30. Businesses have been good about providing the food – but they are not as able to provide the bodies to serve, so Judy and Carol have been doing the serving.

BENJAMIN'S HOUSE: October 10, 2021 marked the 10th Anniversary of Benjamin House Emergency Shelter. Lori Zahrbock, executive director, provided a temple talk on October 10 at both worship services thanking the members of Bethany for their continued support.

PRAYER SHAWLS: Our prayer shawl ministry continued with knitters alone with their needles more than together, but they are still knitting! More of us than ever need the comfort and support of the incredible healing power of the prayer and love from these shawls, and we definitely tried our best to find a way to get them to those that need them. If you would like to pick up a prayer shawl for someone in need, please take one from the designated cabinet across from the main office.

TRUCK LOADING: Volunteers loaded boxes from various churches from 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. on October 9, 2021. More than one-half of the semi-trailer was filled with items that will be dispersed throughout the world.

CHRISTMAS DINNER: The Wow Bible study group led a congregation wide effort entitled “*Bethany's Big Heart – God's Love in Action*” to supply Aldi and Marketplace gift cards to persons in the community during the month of December. This was an extremely creative way to serve the community in lieu of Bethany's Annual Christmas Dinner. Through their efforts, the group raised more than \$12,000! In addition to handing out gift cards, they also contributed to God's Global Barn Yard and the Association of Churches for Emergency Outreach (ACEO).

PERSONAL CARE PACKAGES: Thank you to all who donated items for personal care packages that were delivered to three women's shelters. Each package included a bath towel, shampoo, body wash, toothpaste, tooth brush, hairbrush and emery boards.

ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES FOR EMERGENCY OUTREACH (ACEO): Members from Mission Concerns help this organization three to four weeks a year helping people in emergency situations such as rent, utilities, food, housing, etc.

After faithful service, our Mission Concerns chair, Annie Antonson, resigned her position. We would like to thank her for her compassion, organization, love and commitment to this team and the church. May God continue to bless you.

A special thanks to all members and volunteers that allow us to continue sharing the Good News.

In Loving Service,
Mission Concerns Committee

Invite & Welcome Team

I am sure I speak on behalf of many when I say that it was a breath of fresh air (literally) to have a sense of normalcy this year with our ability to congregate outdoors. It was wonderful to be able to participate in the many outdoor worship and gathering opportunities that were hosted this past year and to see how Bethany and its congregation were able to so easily adapt to the circumstances this year! Being able to maintain connections while staying within our own comfort zones for regathering was such a blessing.

The Welcome Team also tried to focus on connections and outreach as we worked to rejoin our new members with one another and remind them that even though they have come to us during a time of separation, they are still a vital part of our congregation. In the spring, we put together baskets with a plant, popcorn from Poppy's popcorn, a treat for the children and a caring note. Members of the Welcome Team personally delivered these baskets as an attempt to reach all new members from 2019 and 2020. During the summer, we hosted one of the Music Under the Tent evenings. Welcome Team members worked together to serve pizza, drinks and fellowship with all those who attended. In the fall, we once again put together an outreach opportunity for all our more recent new members and their sponsor families. This opportunity included a family gift certificate to Mommsen's Harvest Hills Pumpkin Patch or a gift card to Cabin Coffee for both the new members and their sponsor. The idea behind this was that sponsors and new members could spend time connecting and maintaining their relationship. Members of the Welcome Team also volunteered at the Fall Fest event last October by serving lunches and assisting as needed! It was a great year and wonderful to have so much of our time spent building connections!

In addition to our outreach efforts, the Welcome Team also spent time updating and making changes to various forms that are used for new members. We revised the New Member form and updated the Marriage Service Guidance booklet. These updates consisted of some minor changes as well as updated language, making them more welcoming and gender neutral as we recognize Bethany as an RIC church. The Welcome Team has also volunteered to take over the Time and Talent sheets that new members fill out when they join Bethany. Our hope for this is that we will be able to act as a connection between the new member and their areas of interest by putting them in touch with committee members that align with the new members abilities.

With that, as we start 2022, the Welcome Team is looking for new members! If you would like to join a small group dedicated to creating a welcoming environment for all, then we would love to have you! Please reach out to myself or any of the members for information. We hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season and we look forward to continuing our outreach efforts in the coming year!

Thank you all for a great 2021,

Kayelon Campbell Murphy, Committee Chair
The Invite and Welcome Team

Caring Community

The role of Caring Community is to recognize and facilitate a caring response to all Bethany members with temporary needs, those going through trying times, care for our homebound members and more.

The coordinators meet once a month. The committee has a variety of care teams in place. Please help us keep current on all Bethany members. If you know of someone who you think could benefit from our team, please let anyone on the Caring Community team know, or call the church office. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Weber

Current Team: Pastor Arthur, Pastor Sue, Gail Weber, Paulette Hanson, Monica Berkseth, Kathy Swenson, Shirley Peterson and Pauli Storm

Safely Regathering Task Force

As the name of our task force implies, our priority has been the preservation of the health and lives of our congregants, visitors, staff and clergy as we make recommendations to our church leadership regarding moving back to our treasured “normal” experiences at Bethany. We rely on our Pastor and Church Council to deliberate our recommendations in conjunction with their knowledge of the total picture of Bethany’s needs in order for them to determine the path forward.

We have continued to meet bi-weekly through the year and have continued to use resources including the Wisconsin Department of Public Health, Barron County Public Health Department (BCPHD), Center for Disease Control (CDC), Wisconsin Council of Churches, ELCA Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and data from local and regional health systems. We have tracked COVID case numbers, infection rates and percent of positive COVID tests on a daily basis, and have followed COVID hospitalization rates, ICU capacities, regional COVID death rates and COVID vaccination rates on a bi-weekly basis. Our task force consists of three people with medical backgrounds and three staff persons from Bethany. Since his arrival, Pastor Arthur has also been attending our meetings (a welcome addition!).

January 2021 began with Barron County’s new daily COVID case number at 53 per 100,000 population, placing us in BCPHD recommending indoor gatherings having a maximum of 10 people with the additional recommendations of masking and distancing. On January 19, Governor Evers issued an Emergency Order requiring face coverings for indoor spaces with penalty of a \$200 fine for non-compliance. This order was extended until April 5.

In early February, county COVID case numbers declined to 25, close to the threshold (24), at which BCPHD guidelines allowed indoor gatherings to increase to 25% of room capacity. At that time, we recommended to church leadership that Bethany resume indoor worship services and indoor activities with mitigation practices to attempt to minimize disease transmission. Over the next four months, case numbers continued to decline and COVID vaccination rates increased until vaccination rates plateaued in June. Church leadership opted to schedule summer worship services outdoors under the tent.

In June, the county case numbers had decreased to less than 1 and the CDC relaxed its mask recommendation for indoor gatherings to optional for those vaccinated and required for those unvaccinated. We forwarded that recommendation to church leadership, they accepted it, and for nearly two months, many felt that normalcy was just around the corner. However, in late July, the beginning of the Delta surge began in Barron County and the CDC mask recommendation changed to all people old than two years of age should be masked whether vaccinated or unvaccinated. This change was prompted by the discovery that the Delta variant was able to be transmitted by both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. The task force recommended that change to church leadership. The Delta surge had a peak in Barron County on December 4 with 99 cases per 100,000 population. Most concerning was the effect this surge had on our local, regional and statewide health systems. Because of the large numbers of hospitalized COVID patients, there were many days in which local people, needing COVID and non-COVID care, had to be transported to distant hospitals with available capacity such as Madison, Milwaukee, Green Bay and Janesville. On some occasions, there were no available beds within the state or even surrounding states, and local people were kept in the Emergency Department for up to 48 hours until a bed became available, either locally or at a distant hospital.

The Delta surge has abated, but we are now in the upward slope of the Omicron surge. The good news is that this variant does not appear to cause as much severe disease in most people as compared to previous variants. The bad news is that it is much more transmissible and larger numbers of people are getting infected, which has the possibility of again overwhelming our health care systems. As of today, January 14, 2022, the case number is 167 per 100,000 population.

Safely Regathering Task Force (*continued*)

At this time, we are still wearing masks at two of our three worship services, we are still passing the peace with a nod or gesture, we are not passing the offering plate and we are using pre-packaged Communion elements while seated in the pews. We are not enjoying our choirs nor eating meals in the building. However, many of the mitigation practices of the bleak winter of 2021 are behind us. The Bibles and hymnals are back in the pew racks, we are congregationally singing hymns and responses, every other pew is no longer roped off, we are no longer making reservations to attend worship to avoid exceeding capacity limits, we no longer have the constraint of shortened services, we have the return of vocal and brass musical ensembles and the bulletins are back. While making predictions during this pandemic has been hazardous, many experts believe the current Omicron surge might be the last large surge. We hope and pray that will be the case and that we can progress toward “normalcy” as quickly as it is safely possible.

Church leadership has instituted optional masking for the 11:00 a.m. service and for coffee/fellowship time. While the task force did not endorse these changes at this precarious time of the Omicron surge, we understand that church leadership has a broader focus and greater awareness of the total needs of our congregation. Therefore, we support church leadership’s ability and duty to make these types of decisions addressing the total needs of the congregation. We pledge our support in offering continued advice and guidance in the realm of safety as they make continued decisions on our path toward post-pandemic experience at Bethany.

From Galatians, Chapter 5, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. There is no law against things like this. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with its passions and desires.”

In Christ,

Mark Nymo, Chairperson

Pat McCann

Melissa Tomesh

Angie Buchli

Amy Brekke

Dawn Paul

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild of Bethany is a wonderful way for any Bethany member to serve our church. We have lost many helpers over the last two years and are about to embark on a recruitment campaign. If you have a Sunday, a few Sundays or a month of Sundays we can find a spot for you!

We will continue to be the 'Behind-the Scenes' group that sets the table for the Lord's Supper. Over the last year, we have kept our beautiful altar prepared, kept the candles full of oil and readied trays of communion elements each Sunday.

Please reach out to Audrey Kusilek if you are interested in joining the Altar Guild.

Audrey Kusilek, Chair

Sue Finstad, Secretary

Bethany's Big Heart – God's Love in Action

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Bethany holds a long tradition of hosting a Christmas dinner. For years, the community has gathered around the tables at Bethany for a hot meal, good conversation and fellowship. COVID got in the way of that plan last year, yet the tradition continued due to a group of people who were committed to carry on providing food boxes to the community.

This year, the pandemic still lingers, however once again Bethany folks stepped up and said, "We can make this happen." And happen it did, with an emphasis on hunger issues. The goal was set to raise \$10,000 and at the writing of this report that goal was met and exceeded.

Over 200 hundred food gift cards were purchased and distributed to the Spirit of Christmas, Benjamin's House and the Bethany congregation through random acts of kindness. It's estimated that over 500 individuals will be touched through these gifts. In addition, 50 prepared meals were offered through the Tuesday Lunch Box. Also, donations were made to the Association of Churches for Emergency Outreach (ACEO) program and God's Global Barnyard, all with the focus on local and world hunger beyond the holidays.

None of this could have happened without people who "showed up" and a congregation that gave their support through volunteer efforts and generous financial support. Bethany is a church that not only speaks of God's Love, but a church that puts that love into action. I believe that God lives in each of our hearts. And although we have differing opinions, it's obvious that God's love brings us together to accomplish great things. We set the goal high, and we have not been disappointed. Jesus is our model for what it means to live from our heart, to let our light shine. Bethany's Big Heart is living and shining in the Barron county community and the world, showing God's Love in Action. This is truly God's Work, our Hands. Thanks to everyone who helped and is helping to address hunger in our global community.

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This was another unusual year because the Covid virus and its variants continued to keep us from operating in our normal manner. We did not let it stop us completely from moving forward with women's events.

In February, we set aside time to honor Women Who Act Boldly. Those who belong to Prayer Chains, read to or visit shut-ins, sew quilts to help people stay warm or feel safe, those who knit/crochet hats for newborns, who collect items for various kits – sewing, health and Hospice, who sew dresses for little girls in Malawi, who keep women safe from violence, sex trafficking or advocate for better care for residents in nursing homes. Ordinary women trying to make a difference in our world.

The Bethany Quilters sewed up many, many tops while at home and put out a plea for sheets to be used for backings or materials from 1/2 yard on up to many yards. If flannel sheets came in, Naomi Circle made receiving blankets and diapers from them.

In April, we accepted Ione Gohl's resignation as our WELCA Treasurer for many, many years. Her wonderful smiles and contributions to our meetings will be missed. Thank you, Ione, for sharing your talents!

In June, some of our circles began meeting again either at church or, with warmer weather, in local parks. Some worked on projects at home.

Our 11th Triennial Convention planned in Phoenix was rescheduled as a ZOOM visit August 3-5. The newly elected board will serve a two-year term. They hope that when the 2023 Convention is held that they can go back to their three-year term cycle.

In October, 171 quilts, 12 sewing kits and 21 personal care kits were loaded on the LWR truck. We also donated 40 Hospice Kits to Global Missions.

This fall, Audrey Kusilek headed up a Lefse Baking Workshop. Lefse sold between services brought in \$1,731, which will go towards supporting many ministries of WELCA.

On Thankoffering Sunday, we handed out 130 loaves of fruit and nut breads to each family attending worship that day, plus some were taken to shut-ins, too.

Our Bethany WELCA women try to carry out our mission statement through the year – “Committing ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engaging in ministry and actions, promoting healing and wholeness in our church, society and the world.” We thank our Bethany congregation for helping support our endeavors during each year.

Bethany WELCA Financial Report

Balance on Hand - December 31, 2020	\$10,333.97
INCOME	
Circle Quarterly	\$138.00
Coins for Hunger	\$134.88
Lefse Sales	\$1,731.00
Love Offering	\$25.00
Thankoffering	\$895.00
Donations	<u>\$570.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$3,493.88
EXPENSES	
Miscellaneous	\$200.39
Women of ELCA	\$1,142.88
Lefse Expense	<u>\$104.48</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,447.75
Checkbook Balance on December 31, 2021	\$12,380.10

Respectfully Submitted,
Gail Weber

2021 Good Samaritan Checking Account

Income:

Balance (January 1, 2021)	\$15,474.22
Receipts	<u>\$1,585.00</u>
Total	\$17,059.22

Expenses

Hotel	\$1,000.00
ACEO	\$4,000.00
Vehicle Towing	\$669.25
Lunch Box reimbursements	\$224.92
Home Repairs	\$50.00
New Checks	<u>\$21.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$5,965.17

Balance on Hand (December 31, 2021)	\$11,094.05
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Trust Fund

The Trust Fund was established in 1983 to accept undesignated gifts received by this congregation, such as, but not limited to, bequests, life insurance proceeds and remainders from life income agreements from any individual or corporation or organization or and other source in cash or in property acceptable to them. All trust funds and property shall be kept and maintained separate, distinct and independent from the funds and property otherwise belonging to the church.

The purpose of the fund is to provide annual distributions beyond the operating budget of this congregation that will enable the further growth of our church, its ministries and stewardship opportunities.

This year, the Trust Fund lovingly accepted gifts in God's name totaling \$100,500. The Trust is extremely grateful to members of Bethany who offered these wonderful monetary donations.

The Trust Fund would like to thank Business & Estate Advisers of WI, whose contributions to the Trust, since 1983, total \$40,388.76 in lieu of fees. The distribution contributed 'in kind' by Valmark Securities to the Trust totals \$13,946.62 since inception in 1983. Also, many thanks to the Trust Fund Committee for their work and care of these gifts.

Thank you for caring and sharing as we work together to spread the word of God around the world. God's Work, Our Hands.

2021 Goals & Objectives

- Promote the Trust Fund
- Share the stories of the ministries funded
- Increase giving
- Promote giving to the Fund
- Develop written and web based promotional materials

Balance as of December 31, 2020	\$529,141.00
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Planned Distribution based on 5%	\$26,450.00
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2021 Gifts Distributed from the Fund:

Naomi Circle	\$500
Mission Jamaica	\$2,500
Christmas Dinner Gift cards	\$1,000
Summer Tent Ministry	\$7,500
Feed My Starving Children	\$4,750
Wisconsin Council of Churches	<u>\$10,000</u>
Total Distributions	\$26,250.00

Gifts received in 2021	\$100,500.00
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Interest/Dividends – Gain (Loss)	\$47,332.00
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Ending Fund Balance as of December 31, 2021	\$650,723.00
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2021 Activity Report For All Designated Funds

Description	Opening Balance	YTD Credits	YTD Debits	Ending Balance
Trust Fund	\$0.00	\$650,722.67	\$0.00	\$650,722.67
World Hunger & LWR	\$0.00	\$2,825.00	\$2,825.00	\$0.00
Bethany Missions	\$4,942.87	\$1,270.00	\$850.00	\$5,362.87
Sunday School Offering	\$2,883.27	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$2,888.27
Christmas Dinner	\$1,647.38	\$13,790.00	\$5,500.00	\$9,937.38
Good Samaritan Fund	\$14,944.78	\$1,585.00	\$6,652.27	\$9,877.51
Energy Savings Fund	\$0.00	\$1,837.40	\$0.00	\$1,837.40
Memorial Fund	\$2,175.41	\$4,530.00	\$0.00	\$6,705.41
Banner Fund	\$470.65	\$1,309.29	\$1,714.94	\$65.00
Altar Guild	\$878.59	\$350.00	\$130.00	\$1,098.59
Weddings	\$1,744.67	\$600.00	\$599.21	\$1,745.46
Youth Account	\$5,608.24	\$460.00	\$100.00	\$5,968.24
Library	\$518.68	\$25.00	\$46.55	\$497.13
Nursery	\$313.79	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$313.79
Children's Library	\$519.86	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$519.86
HS Trips	\$24,310.48	\$18,520.27	\$9,764.09	\$33,066.66
Choirs & Music	\$5,975.80	\$17,302.00	\$10,332.01	\$12,945.79
Worship Arts	\$491.00	\$0.00	\$39.99	\$451.01
Contingency Fund	\$2,009.95	\$600.00	\$1,040.00	\$1,569.95
Flower Garden	\$970.55	\$705.00	\$241.69	\$1,433.86
Building Fund	\$67,220.63	\$113,877.84	\$160,037.00	\$21,061.47
Hi League	\$1,107.43	\$350.00	\$0.00	\$1,457.43
Jr High League	\$7,268.75	\$45.00	\$0.00	\$7,313.75
MS Pizza Money	\$181.86	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$331.86
Triennial Fund	\$2,096.43	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,096.43
Parish Nurse Ministry	\$1,094.82	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,094.82
Mission Jamaica	\$2,732.15	\$7,097.43	\$8,200.00	\$1,629.58
ELCA Disaster Relief	\$0.00	\$6,747.00	\$6,747.00	\$0.00
Organ Maintenance	\$13,994.16	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,994.16
General Gift Fund	\$1,029.25	\$145,221.89	\$16,247.00	\$130,004.14
Seminarian Fund	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Media Project	\$300.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Malawi	\$0.00	\$215.00	\$215.00	\$0.00
BIC	\$830.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$930.00
Bible Fund	\$708.90	\$175.00	\$0.00	\$883.90
Financial Peace University	\$153.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$153.00
Facility Deposits	\$2,250.00	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$2,550.00
Bus Fund	\$21,696.41	\$250.00	\$497.53	\$21,448.88
Lead Pastor Sabbatical	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Assoc Pastor Sabbatical	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Hospitality Fund	\$3,102.85	\$44.10	\$288.73	\$2,858.22
Healthy Initiative 2010-2012	\$1,236.97	\$0.00	\$210.36	\$1,026.61

Financial Secretary's Report

Year Ended 12/31/2021

General Funds

Regular offering	\$556,864.18
Loose offering	2,516.16
Lent/Easter	2,861.00
Thanksgiving	480.00
Christmas/Advent	2,998.00
Radio	5,215.00
Regular offering 2020	170.00
Regular offering 2022	<u>6,100.00</u>

Total General **\$577,204.34**

Other Funds

World Hunger/LWR	\$2,825.00
Bethany Missions	1,270.00
Good Samaritan	1,485.00
Memorial	4,530.00
Building Fund 2021	110,165.00
Building Fund 2022	2,000.00
Mission Jamaica	6,747.43
Banner Fund	460.00
Bus Fund	280.00
Choirs/Music	12,207.00
Christmas Dinner	12,790.00
Seminary Fund	100.00
Clearing Fund	279,351.86

Confirmation Ministry	739.00
ELCA Disaster Relief	6,747.00
Hospitality	44.00
Flower Garden	705.00
Hi League Fund	200.00
HS Trips	16,420.27
Jr High League	195.00
M.S Pizza	150.00
Library Fund - Adult	25.00
Malawi	215.00
Office Expense	15.00
Sunday Materials	103.54
Sunday School	25.05
Sunday School Offering	5.00
VBS	2,863.93
Weddings	600.00
Worship Supplies	423.00
Youth	<u>440.00</u>

Total Other **\$464,127.08**

Total Offering **\$1,041,331.42**

Submitted by Susan Derro

Balance Sheet

Year End 12/31/2021

	2020	2021
Assets		
Current		
General Funds		
Checking	\$238,678.23	\$198,351.76
Designated Funds	\$198,909.58	\$306,218.43
Bethany Trust Fund	\$0.00	\$650,722.67
Petty Cash Checking	<u>\$2,000.00</u>	<u>\$2,000.00</u>
Total Current	\$439,587.81	\$1,158,509.40
Fixed (Note 1)		
Bethany Lutheran Church	\$10,420,000.00	\$10,420,000.00
Equipment and Furnishings	\$1,271,917.80	\$1,271,917.80
Martin Looper II Van	<u>\$52,378.00</u>	<u>\$52,378.00</u>
Total Fixed	\$11,744,295.80	\$11,744,295.80
 Total Assets	 \$12,183,883.61	 \$12,902,805.20
 Liabilities		
Mortgage - Thrivent Financial	\$230,949.93	\$129,855.69
Designated Funds (With Donor Restrictions)		<u>\$956,941.10</u>
Total Liabilities		\$1,086,796.79
 Net Equity - (Assets - Liabilities)	 \$11,952,933.68	 \$11,816,008.41

Note 1: Fixed assets are based upon insurance replacement value: not market value.
Property parcels without buildings are not counted in assets.
Martin Looper II Van valued at cost in 2011, per insurance policy.

This balance sheet has not been audited. It is for information only.

Bethany Lutheran Church

2021 Financial Statement & 2022 Proposed Budget

	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	2022 Budget
INCOME			
Envelopes - General	\$685,000.00	\$569,374.18	\$567,600.00
Loose Offering	\$2,000.00	\$2,516.16	\$3,000.00
Lenten/Easter Offering	\$3,000.00	\$2,861.00	\$3,000.00
Thanksgiving offering	\$600.00	\$480.00	\$600.00
Advent/Christmas Offering	\$6,000.00	\$2,998.00	\$3,000.00
Radio Income	\$3,000.00	\$5,215.00	\$5,000.00
Interest Checking	\$300.00	\$246.54	\$300.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$699,900.00	\$583,690.88	\$582,500.00
 PASTORAL SALARIES			
Salary	\$91,862.00	\$80,002.95	\$86,887.00
Housing	\$49,000.00	\$37,101.16	\$24,000.00
ELCA Benefits	\$40,322.00	\$25,498.47	\$32,893.00
Continuing Education	\$2,400.00	\$555.00	\$1,500.00
Publications/Pastoral Exp	\$2,000.00	\$459.44	\$1,500.00
Social Sec Allowance	\$10,776.00	\$8,799.05	\$6,570.00
Mileage Reimbursement	\$3,000.00	\$670.88	\$2,000.00
Sabbatical	\$1,000.00	-\$1,000.00	\$500.00
TOTAL PASTORAL SALARIES	\$200,360.00	\$152,086.95	\$155,850.00
 EDUCATION SALARIES			
Salaries	\$76,436.00	\$85,551.14	\$92,720.00
Benefits	\$14,326.00	\$24,175.29	\$30,272.00
Expenses	\$5,300.00	\$754.00	\$5,300.00
TOTAL EDUCATION SALARIES	\$96,062.00	\$110,480.43	\$128,292.00
 MUSIC SALARIES			
TOTAL MUSIC SALARIES	\$14,920.00	\$6,560.56	\$11,920.00

Bethany Lutheran Church

2021 Financial Statement & 2022 Proposed Budget

	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	2022 Budget
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SALARIES			
Salaries	\$119,432.00	\$104,343.38	\$117,432.00
Benefits	\$36,645.00	\$36,115.20	\$36,924.00
Expenses	\$3,000.00	\$48.72	\$3,000.00
TOTAL ADMIN SUPPORT SALARIES	\$159,077.00	\$140,507.30	\$157,356.00
FICA Employers Part	\$16,125.00	\$14,883.46	\$16,988.00
TOTAL SALARIES	\$486,544.00	\$424,518.70	\$470,406.00
OTHER EXPENSES			
Benevolences	\$48,534.00	\$45,034.50	\$46,540.00
Education	\$23,750.00	\$12,497.41	\$11,914.00
Worship/Committees	\$15,950.00	\$9,853.85	\$10,440.00
Worship Supplies	\$4,000.00	\$3,933.46	\$4,000.00
Office	\$35,500.00	\$31,210.06	\$33,500.00
Conventions/Conferences	\$1,750.00	\$530.00	\$1,750.00
Special Ministry	\$15,000.00	\$18,690.25	\$5,000.00
Utilities	\$40,700.00	\$30,253.80	\$40,700.00
Maintenance/Repair	\$41,000.00	\$28,625.32	\$36,250.00
Insurance	\$22,000.00	\$18,870.00	\$22,000.00
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	\$248,184.00	\$199,498.65	\$212,094.00
TOTAL ALL EXPENSES	\$734,728.00	\$624,017.35	\$682,500.00
TTL CONTRIB OVER/UNDER	-\$34,828.00	-\$40,326.47	-\$100,000.00*

*We have \$100,000 in the checking account to cover the expected deficit.

Pastoral Salaries Include: Lead Pastor, Visitation Pastor

Education Salaries Include: Music Director, Director of Education/Youth Ministries, Ministry Assistant

Music Salaries Include: Worship Accompanists, Choir Directors, Choir Accompanists, Ensembles, Bell Directors

Administrative Support Salaries Include: Director of Church Business, Communications & Publications Specialist, Custodian, Financial Secretaries, Kitchen Coordinator, Nursery Attendants

2021 Membership Statistics

New Members:

Adults	7
Children	<u>5</u>
	12

Members Received During 2021

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
Baptism - Children	2	0
Baptism - Adults	0	0
Affirmation of Faith	2	1
Transferred from ELCA Congregations	8	6
Transferred from other Lutheran Congregations	0	0
Transferred from non-Lutheran Congregations	0	0
Other sources & statistical adjustment	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Received	12	7
Baptized Members Confirmed	<u>0</u>	<u>13</u>
Total	12	20

Members Removed During 2021

Death	13	13
Transferred to other ELCA Congregations	2	2
Transferred to other Lutheran Congregations	4	4
Transferred to non-Lutheran Congregations	0	0
Other sources & statistical adjustment	<u>37</u>	<u>35</u>
Total Removed:	56	54

Membership - End of 2020:	1,261	951
Membership - End of 2021:	1,217	917

2021 Pastoral Acts

Baptisms:	6
Weddings:	1
Funerals:	17

[illegible]

[illegible]

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY



Today our congregation gathers in prayer and hope to begin another year of ministry. We bring with us the memory of a year like no other, even as we move into a future that we cannot yet imagine. Yet even now, as in every age, God is our refuge and strength. In times of plenty and want, in times of conflict and peace, in times of growing and pruning, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We remember the past year with lament and gratitude. We have lost so much, and so much still feels uncertain. We have also witnessed God's hand at work in new and unexpected ways. We delight at hidden seeds bearing surprising and wonderful fruit. When our own resources fail, when we cannot predict the future, when we must rely on God alone, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We celebrate this moment and the many ways God has held us together as a community. We give thanks for the gift of our church building and the welcome it provides, even as we bless God for the marvel of technology and the new bonds of connection it makes possible. When our bodies need sanctuary, when our minds need expanding, when your grace must transcend our limitations, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We look ahead to the road we will travel together this year. We anticipate and receive with joy the new gifts God's love has planned. We pray for the grace to let go of what has served its holy purpose. When we are trailblazers or followers, when we are seekers or visionaries, when we must walk by faith and not by sight, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

And so we pray: Grace our meeting, O God, with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the Spirit who has guided the church from the beginning, the Spirit of our risen Lord Jesus, the Spirit who sends us as healers and restorers of your beloved world. You are the source of our life together. You are the rock and cornerstone.

You have called us for such a time as this.

God of the Fertile Fields

1 God of the fer - tile fields, sha - per of
 2 We would be stew - ards true, hold - ing in
 3 As grows the hid - den seed to fruit that
 4 God of the coun - try - side, dear to the

earth that yields our dai - ly bread: forth from your
 trust from you all that you give; help us in
 serves our need, so your reign grows. Let all our
 Christ who died to make us one: we pledge our

boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,
 love to share, teach us like you to care
 toil be used, no gift of yours a - bused,
 lives a - new in faith - ful love to you.

that all in ev - 'ry land be clothed and fed.
 for peo - ple ev - 'ry - where, that all may live.
 no hum - ble task re - fused your love be - stows.
 Guide all we say and do. Your will be done.

All Creation Sings #1063

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**O God,
 you have called your servants
 to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
 by paths as yet untrodden,
 through perils unknown.
 Give us faith to go out with good courage,
 not knowing where we go,
 but only that your hand is leading us
 and your love supporting us;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen. (ELW, p. 317)**

Change and the need for creativity have become constants over the last year and a half in many aspects of life, including the church. This was the case for **Living Christ Lutheran Church** in Flagstaff, Ariz., even before a global pandemic caused many of us to rethink what it means to be church. Generosity from all three expressions of the ELCA (the churchwide organization, the Grand Canyon Synod and members of Living Christ) helped turn a congregation “on the road out of town, near the mall” into an online presence reaching over 500 people a week from Phoenix to the Philippines. (Read more about Living Christ in the current issue of “**Stories of Faith in Action**” at **ELCA.org/SOFIA**.)

Many other congregations have found new ways to connect both when in-person worship was impossible and when congregations began to return to their sanctuaries. Generosity, especially through Mission Support, helped us find and support these new ways of being connected. Early in the pandemic, ELCA Worship launched the “Worship in the Home” webpage, with Scripture, hymn links, prayers and reflections for each

Sunday. These resources were and continue to be used in congregations across the ELCA—even at **Sitka Lutheran Church** in Alaska, whose members printed and hand-delivered “Worship in the Home” resources to fellow members without internet access.

Change and creativity have taught us many things. As Pastor Sandra Rudd of Sitka Lutheran Church noted, “The pandemic was a stark illustration of the fact that the church is not a building. A lot of people say that, but we didn’t fully know it until we didn’t have a building to use. We learned that there are many ways to be connected as the church.” Throughout the pandemic, the ELCA has changed and adapted, doing ministry in new and creative ways, because of the generosity of its members. Even now, you may be gathering in a new way for your annual meeting, to discern how you will steward the gifts shared generously with your congregation to do ministry in your community and beyond. As you have these important conversations, remember that your gifts of time, talent and resources have helped create new spaces beyond our walls and buildings where we continue to worship, serve and love God and each other.

ANNUAL REPORT

— 2021 —