



The Banner

Every person feels, knows and shares God's love

Monthly Newsletter for Bethany United Methodist Church • Madison, WI • Vol. 54, No. 1 • January 2021

Dr. Shannon Gravelle — Director of Music

Greetings and peace to you and your loved ones! My name is Shannon Gravelle, and I am humbled and honored to serve as Bethany United Methodist Church's new Director of Music. I was particularly struck by the welcoming and warm reception from the search committee and the staff. I am eager to meet the rest of the community, and look forward to learning about you.

I was born in Minnesota, and received my undergrad degrees in music, music education, and religion from Luther College. I taught middle/high school choir in Arizona and Wisconsin for five years before pursuing graduate degrees. My masters of music in choral conducting is from California State University Long Beach (Bob Cole Conservatory of Music), and my doctorate of musical



arts in choral conducting and pedagogy is from the University of Iowa. I've spent the last five years in North Carolina. I recently finished a job as Director of Choral Activities and Coordinator of Music Education at Meredith College in Raleigh, NC. It was a wonderful community and I thoroughly enjoyed my students. In late March, my spouse matched for OBGYN residency in Madison. This was a delightful surprise, as my spouse was a music major at UW Madison years ago, and grew up in Merrill, Wisconsin. I lived in Madison over 10 years ago for two short years. It's actually where we became engaged.

We recently moved to Sun Prairie, where my 5-yr-old will start kindergarten and my 3-yr-old will go to a new preschool. You will likely see my two children around periodically, probably accompanied by my mom, Judy.

I look forward to joining your community and getting to know you. Music is such a beautiful way to work together and share a message, enhance worship, and feed our own spiritual well-being. I am grateful to walk on this journey with you.



PASTOR'S COLUMN



Reversing Some Troubling Trends, and Offering Hope

I was alarmed at our Wisconsin Annual Conference this year – there's no other way to say it. Something was said during a normally dry presentation, the Conference Statistician's Report. We were told that the membership in our Wisconsin congregations had decreased by 30% since 2012, dropping from 73,778 to 52,077 members.



That is so sad, especially since it reflects a trend all across the nation – and not just in the United Methodist Church. We have been experiencing some fundamental changes in our society, with far fewer people choosing to be involved in things like churches and civic clubs and other community organizations. And then on top of that, our denomination has been experiencing painful divisions. Our society and our denomination are polarized, and it is painful to watch.

The picture looks somewhat better at Bethany, at least when comparing our statistics to Wisconsin or our denomination as a whole. Our church membership has dropped 8% during the same period. That's far better than 30%, but still it means that we have had a net loss of 4 participants on average per year. That adds up over time, and it is certainly noticeable if you have been here for one or two decades or more.

The good news is that this trend can be reversed with all of us working together! Welcoming a few additional households more per year than what we have been doing would make a difference over time – and there is no shortage of people who need the hope and care that our church offers. Here are some suggestions for all of us:

Invite, Invite, Invite – About 85% of people get involved in a church because they have been invited by a member. Doing the work of inviting new people is therefore critical to the survival of any

church. But don't think of it as a "job." Inviting people to church is a wonderful gift you can offer. You may feel reluctant to do so, because you don't want to come across as "pushy." But particularly after the isolation of the pandemic, people are craving authentic community and meaning right now. Most people would welcome an invitation.

Friend-y or Friendly? – Most churches see themselves as being "friendly." I think that "friend-y" (without the letter "L") would be a better description. That is, the members may have a lot of friends at church, and they enjoy visiting with them. But if newcomers don't feel instantly welcomed, the church won't feel friendly to them at all. (Another problem is when churches take the "r" out of "friendly" – I'm glad that doesn't happen here!)

Step Over to Say Hello – For our church to continue being truly friendly, we have to step away from conversations with our current friends whenever we see strangers who need to be welcomed. "What if they are already members?", you may ask. Just say, "Hi, my name is ____." Unless they say, "I know, I've been married to you for 25 years," you've just made a new friend!

Help Visitors Make Connections – Introduce visitors to your friends. If they have children, introduce them to Sunday school leaders. If they are interested in music or Bible studies or some other group, introduce them to those leaders. Through your welcoming attitude, you are introducing them not only to Bethany but also to Christ's love!

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Greg



THE YOUTH MISSION TRIP TEAM READY TO LEAVE

From left: Rod McKenzie, Jacquie Day, Simon Yuroff, Charlie Yuroff, Brigit Parlow, Abby Rahn, Lee Swim, Sean McLain, Maggie McLain

Simple Gifts for August — “The Road Home Dane County”

Simple gift offerings during August are going to support The Road Home Dane County, which is committed to ending the issue of family homelessness in our community.



Every child deserves a home

Simple gifts and other contributions can be made by placing loose coins in the offering plates, or by putting cash or a check in mission envelopes. Offerings can also be mailed in or made online at BethanyMadison.org (click on We Serve and, from the drop-down menu, select Giving Financially).

The Road Home Dane County is dedicated to building long-term relationships with homeless families with children that change lives. The Road Home works with families, not only to relieve the immediate crisis of homelessness, but also to build skills, resources, and relationships that set the stage for long-term success.

To accomplish its mission, the Road Home relies on the help and support of individuals, congregations, and businesses throughout Madison and beyond. It also partners with other nonprofits, government agencies, United Way of Dane County, people with lived experiences of homelessness, volunteers, and donors, to create solutions that work. The idea is that for the greater good of our city and for humankind, we all can and should join together to make a difference because every child deserves a home.

While it might sometimes be hidden from sight, homelessness exists here. Our community suffers from a critical lack of affordable housing, pushing vulnerable families out of housing and leading to homelessness. Researchers estimate that there are between 7,000 to 27,000 more people in need of affordable housing in our community than there are affordable housing units available. They also predict that without intervention, this gap will grow. The cost of homelessness is high — putting families and children at risk for greater physical, emotional, and academic challenges.

The Road Home Dane County, which was originally known as Interfaith Hospitality Network of the Madison Area, opened its doors on April 26, 1999 as an overflow shelter for families who could not be served by the existing shelters. In the years that followed, the Road Home played a growing role in securing funds and support for affordable housing and providing case management to help families find and maintain that housing. In 2018, the Road Home phased out the shelters to focus on housing and support services. The nonprofit currently operates 10 housing programs and serves more than 200 families with children in Dane County each year.

The Road Home also works closely with JustDane’s Healing House, an eight-bed recuperative care facility. The Healing House provides a safe place for homeless families when someone needs to prepare for or recover from a medical procedure, childbirth, hospitalization or something similar. In addition to donations, another way for congregations to make a difference for families who have experienced homelessness in our community is by providing meals at Healing House.

Please consider giving generously, as your contributions will make a difference in real and relevant ways.

To learn more about The Road Home, visit: <http://trhome.org/>

Up next: Simple gifts for September support Harvest of Hope



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



ZOOM LINKS

Zoom links for all classes and groups are listed on the Bethany website on the Upcoming Events page. From the home page, click on the "Groups and Classes" box at the bottom right of the page. Links are listed by the day of the week they occur on.

AGAPE

Mark your calendars! The next AGAPE meeting will be on Wednesday, September 8th at Bethany. We will be planning out the year's activities. Bring your ideas for guest speakers and/or projects. There will be more information in the September Banner.

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT TO PINE LAKE

Sign up deadline is August 16 for the All Church Retreat at Pine Lake Camp Labor Day Weekend.

Time is running out to register for the All-Church Retreat at Pine Lake this Labor Day weekend. For cost, registration, and details, please contact: Alice Yuroff: alice@yuroff.com or 608-469-6787

The retreat starts the evening of Friday, September 3 and ends the afternoon of Sunday, September 5. Come for all or part of the gathering. Everyone is invited to this retreat — families with young kids, families with older kids, families with no kids, young adults, older adults — everyone is welcome!

Enjoy fellowship with your Bethany Family, as well as fun camp activities like swimming, boating, light hiking, archery, games and campfires. Or you can just relax and enjoy the last weekend of summer. We will also hold a lakeside worship on Sunday morning. To keep everyone safe and comfortable, we will be following all of the health guidelines Pine Lake has developed.

Despite the rustic camp setting — we will not be "roughing it." We will be staying in the Pine Lake Retreat Center — think hotel, not tents or rustic cabins! All meals will be provided.



BETHANY HABITAT WORK DAY

Saturday, August 21st, has been reserved for a workday with Dane County Habitat. We are limited to 8 volunteers on site with present Habitat work site guidelines. The work begins at 8 AM and would run until 3:30 PM at the east side build site. Work scope and tools needed, if any, won't be known until we are closer to the 21st. Space is limited as three spots have already been reserved. If interested, please contact Bob Clingan via email at rcclingan@gmail.com or by phone at 608-284-9328.





Fall Festival



Sunday, September 12, 11:00 am — 1:00 pm

Don't miss the fun for kids of all ages!

- ⇒ Food
- ⇒ Lemonade & Coffee
- ⇒ Large and Small Bounce Houses
- ⇒ Activities and Games for All Ages



Returning to Bethany

Don't miss the "Bethany Petting Farm" including lambs, goats, bunnies, chicks, duck, goose, llama, mini potbelly pig, mini donkey, and a calf.

All on the front lawn!

For Children's Ministry information, contact Lisa Weaver, Director of Children's Ministries
 Phone: (608) 238-6381 / Email: childrensministries@bethanymadison.org

"Pass it on"



Brayden, Brielle, Addy, Brooks

Bethany children have learned the verses of the song *Pass It On* in Zoom Sunday School. One week the children created their own small campfire scenes using twigs, stones, pine needles, crumpled paper, and whatever else they could find at home. You may notice that some of the scenes expanded to include marshmallows on roasting sticks! In addition to singing our own version of the song, we also enjoyed musical videos from Zimbabwe and the Philippines. God's love does indeed spread around the world!

It only takes a spark
 To get a fire going
 And soon all those around are warmed up in its glowing
 That's how it is with God's love
 Once you've experienced it
 You spread His love to everyone
 You want to pass it on

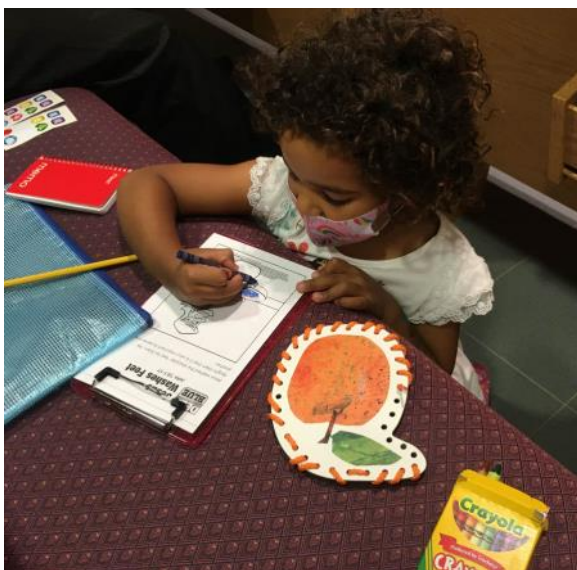
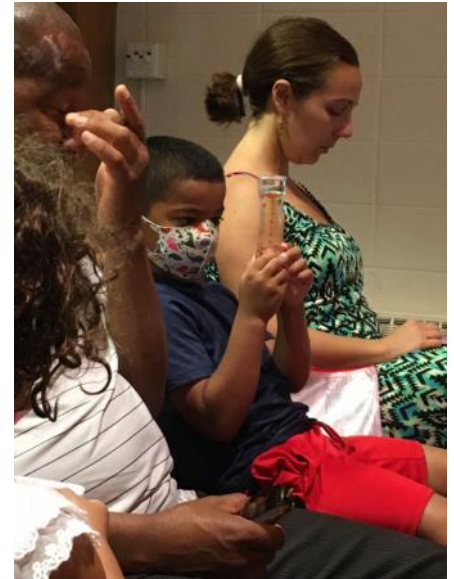


Children's Sunday School

Ms. Lisa and the children (preschool through 5th grade) continue to enjoy Zoom Sunday School at 9:00 am, prior to Sunday morning worship. By now we all know how to show music videos, highlight illustrations from Bible stories, talk and share (mute and unmute!), and are creative with making art projects work out with whatever supplies families have on hand. Zoom Sunday School will continue in this manner until vaccines are available for children. "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20)

Starting on September 12, an in-person Sunday School option will be added to Sunday mornings during the 10:00 am worship service. Children who are in the building will start the worship service with their families in the sanctuary, up through a designated hymn. At that point, children in preschool – 5th grade are invited to walk with a parent (family member) to join Ms. Lisa in Room 223. Ms. Lisa will offer the same Bible story and project shared on Zoom earlier that morning. A second adult helper will be present, though parents (family members) are always welcome to stay for the duration of the class if this helps a child feel comfortable.

See Ms. Lisa with questions, or to indicate interest in one of the options.



A LOOK AT OUR FAITHFULNESS

Sunday, June 27
Total 124

Sunday, July 4
Total..... 122

Sunday, July 11
Total..... 148

Sunday, July 18
Total..... 135

Sunday, July 25
Total..... 113



We are a Reconciling Congregation,
 welcoming all people to be a part of
 our church family.

Information

Office Hours: 8 am - 2:30 pm

Church Office: (608) 238-6381

Email: bethanyoffice@bethanymadison.org

Website: www.bethanymadison.org

Sunday Morning Schedule

Early Bird Coffee Chat (Zoom)	8:30 am
Faithlink Adult Discussion Class	9 am
Zoom Worship	10 am
After-Worship Fellowship (Zoom)	11 am

Bulletin Deadline : Tuesdays at Noon

E-Banner Deadline: Tuesdays at Noon

Banner Deadline for the September Issue: August 11

Staff

Lead Pastor.....	Greg Jewison
Pastor of Visitation	Brad Mather
Director of Children’s Ministries & Music.....	Lisa Weaver
Director of Youth Ministries	Brigit Parlow
Global Mission Partner	Temba Nkomozezi, Mujila Falls, Zambia
Director of Music.....	Dr. Shannon Gravelle
Organist	Sue Poulette
Director of Bell Choirs	Nick Bonaccio
Office Administrator.....	Carl White
Membership Secretary.....	Kathy Doran
Financial Secretary	Sandra Arrington
Treasurer.....	Steven Webster
Custodians.....	Ron Rebholz
Church Phone	(608) 238-6381
Church Office Email	bethanyoffice@bethanymadison.org
Website.....	www.bethanymadison.org

Banner Assembly

Mary Blasdel . Gerry Cotter . Judy Cox . Betsy Dunne . Eileen Dunne
 Vada Mayfield . Kathy Nelson . Gail Steinhorst . Donna Wold