



The Banner

Every person feels, knows and shares God's love

Monthly Newsletter for Bethany United Methodist Church • Madison, WI • Vol. 57, No. 1 • January 2024



“HAPPY” NEW YEAR! 2024

Following the Christmas season our worship series will be entitled “Happy” New Year! During this series we will reflect on what it is that brings true happiness and joy. Hint -- it's not more things, it's relationships. What relationships might you want to strengthen, renew or start during 2024? During our worship series we will examine our relationship with things, with other people, with ourselves and with God. Do you want more joy in 2024? Worship at Bethany and enjoy the special events listed below. Perhaps start or renew a relationship by inviting a friend or neighbor to come with you!

TYROL TUBING

Sat, Jan 13, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Address: 3487 Bohn Road Mt. Horeb, WI 53572

Tickets (\$25) [available online](#). Enjoy tubing, relax in the café with hot drinks and lunch items, sit by the fire pits to warm your hands

GAME NIGHT + TACO BAR

Sat, Jan 20, 4:30 - 6:30 pm

Fellowship Hall @ Bethany Church

Board games, card games, puzzle table, art table

CRAFTERNOON

Sat, Feb 3

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Fellowship Hall @ Bethany Church

Bring a hand project from home to work on in the company of others, or join in one of the craft projects available on that afternoon such as: cutting fabric for lunch smocks, or mending the angel wings used in the Christmas pageant, or working on a felt banner.



PASTOR'S COLUMN



January 7 during worship we will celebrate Communion, the Baptism of Jesus and Epiphany Sunday. As part of our worship service, we will celebrate star words. The use of star words, also called "star gifts," is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in churches for nearly a decade now. The idea is that a list of intention words, or guiding words, are distributed during the Epiphany worship service. Just as the wiseman followed a star leading them to Jesus, these words are meant to guide us in our relationship with Christ. Words are drawn at random and used as a guiding word throughout the year.



I have greatly enjoyed this practice for several years now and have heard wonderful comments from others who have chosen a star word. Even if at first, they were skeptical of their word. My star word for 2023 is story. At first, I thought it was an easy word, every Sunday I tell stories and I am often searching for a story to share during my message. However, as the year progressed it seemed more of a call for me to hear people's stories. I took it as an invitation to understand and get to know people better by listening to their stories. Everyone has a story, and I am grateful for the stories I have heard in 2023 and for the reminder to slow down and listen to people's stories.

Some advice for choosing a word is to let the word pick you and resist the temptation to dig around for a 'better' word or to swap with someone else. You may find that the word fits you perfectly. If so, celebrate that, and see how you can be more intentional about sharing your gift with the world. You may find it is a word that offers you the encouragement or challenge you need. If so, receive that gift and let it shape you in the days, and months ahead. You may find yourself resisting the word or even wanting to reject the word. If so, explore the source of your resistance, and be open to what this word may have to teach you. Live with your word, reflect upon it, journal about it, talk about it with others, and pray about it. Discover how this star gift may shine its light on you and your path throughout the coming year. You are encouraged to place your star word somewhere you will see it regularly throughout the year to allow consistent reflection on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word.

I hope those of you who had a star word for 2023 enjoyed your word. I'm eager to hear your star word story! If you are not in worship on January 7, we can get you a star word. I hope you will enjoy the practice as much as I have. I pray that your star word might be a blessing to you in 2024.

Peace and Joy,

Pastor Julie

Adult Education Sunday Mornings

After church almost every Sunday the Adult Ministry's team hosts either a Speaker Forum or a Discussion Forum linking our faith to real life. The Speaker Forums are held in the Chapel on the third floor. Faithlink is held in room 220 at the top of the stairs on the right. The forums last for about an 45 minutes. Everyone is welcome! Below is our schedule for January and February:

January 7, 2024.....No Forum: Special Church Conference for MCCI vote

January 14, 2024Speaker Forum, Rabbi Bonnie Margulis speaking on Anti-Semitism

January 21, 2024Speaker Forum: Sarah Bullard from Luke house

January 28, 2024Faithlink Forum: Maternal Health and Family Planning

February 4, 2024.....Speaker Forum: Linda Ketchum executive director of Just Dane

February 11, 2024No Forum: Just Bakery baked goods sale in the lobby

February 18, 2024No Forum: Madison Flute Club Chili fundraiser

February 25, 2024Speaker Forum: Gloria and Jim Carter anniversary trip video.

Simple Gifts for January — “The Beacon”

Simple Gift offerings made in January are going to support The Beacon — a homeless day resource center that provides community solutions to help men, women, and children who are experiencing homelessness in Dane County.

In 2016, Dane County purchased the building that previously housed the Madison Chamber of Commerce with plans to renovate it and turn it into a day resource center for the homeless. Dane County chose Catholic Charities to operate this multi-service day resource center and also partnered with the City of Madison and the United Way of Dane County. Together — and with support from people like you — this is a unique collaboration between the business, faith, government, nonprofit, and neighborhood sectors. In all, there are nearly 30 partner agencies under one roof working together in collaboration to change homelessness in our community.



The Beacon, located at 615 East Washington Ave., provides a safe shelter for people who are experiencing homelessness seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The facility also offers a range of free basic needs and wellness services, including:

- ◇ Light breakfast, coffee, daily lunch
- ◇ Private showers and restrooms
- ◇ Laundry (drop off – same day service)
- ◇ Mail center, phones, and copier
- ◇ Day storage
- ◇ Preventative healthcare
- ◇ Private family areas
- ◇ Referrals for mental health counseling
- ◇ Referrals to case managers
- ◇ Transportation between night shelters



In addition, The Beacon provides a range of housing and job assistance services, including classes and access to a quiet computer lab with internet access, where staff can help with resumes and more.

Please consider giving generously, as your support will make a difference in real and relevant ways. In addition to financial support via gifts, The Beacon also welcomes volunteers who are passionate about helping change a person’s life.

To learn more, visit: thebeaconhelps.org/.

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

Up next: Simple gifts for February will be divided between the Allied Drive Wellness Center and Food Pantry.



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 "Upcoming Events" box in the lower right of the page. Links are listed by the day of the week on which they occur.

LYDIA FELLOWSHIP

The next scheduled meeting for United Women in Faith's Lydia Fellowship is Monday, January 8, 2024 at 1:00 pm. We will meet in Fellowship Hall at Bethany. Amy Ford is our hostess. Everyone is welcome at this meeting. If you will be attending, please email [Eileen Rech](mailto:Eileen.Rech@bethany.org) or call at 608-228-6256.

AGAPE

Agape Circle of United Women in Faith will meet on January 8, 2024 at 6:30 pm via Zoom. Gail Steinhorst will be presenting a travelogue of her trip to Australia and New Zealand! All are welcome!

BOOK BROWSERS

The United Women of Faith's Book Browsers meeting in January will be held on Monday, January 15th, at 1:00pm via Zoom. Nancy Gloe will review *The Daughters of Yalta* by Katherine Katz. All are welcome.

FOOD & FELLOWSHIP

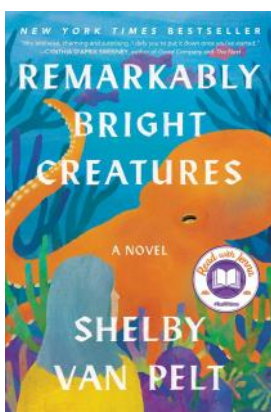
Food and Fellowship will begin 2024 with lunch at North and South on Mineral Point Road. All men and women at Bethany are invited to come for lunch on January 17th at 11:30 am. Everyone orders from the menu and shares a pleasant time of dining on good food and engaging in conversations with one another. This is a good opportunity to get to know each other better and perhaps meet someone new to you. Donna Wold is the hostess for January. If you would like to attend, please [email Donna](mailto:Donna.Wold@bethany.org) or call 608-274-3483 with your reservation by January 15. All are welcome.

REFLECTIONS BOOK STUDY

Reflections Book Club will meet Monday, January 22 at 1:00 pm in the Bethany library.

January's book is *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt — a heartwarming novel about a widow's unlikely friendship with a giant Pacific octopus and the truths she uncovers

about her son's disappearance 30 years ago. Copies of the book are available in the church office. Come and join our lively discussion. Everyone is welcome.



WOMEN'S RETREAT

Attention Bethany women! Plans are being made for a Women's Retreat at Pine Lake Church Camp on the weekend of March 2nd and 3rd. All are invited. Please save the dates and watch for more information!





ANNOUNCEMENTS



BOLIVIA UPDATE

Fantastic! Thank you Bethany for your response to provide financial support of the Bolivian Home for the Aging. With the total of \$7,286.00 we were able to receive matching funds of about the same amount. These funds will now provide most of the hospital beds, mattresses, room chairs, bedding, etc. for this home. Some of the occupants will be widows of Methodist pastors for whom there is little financial support. Many live in their original primitive adobe homes on the altiplano of 14,000' of altitude. I have had the opportunity of personally visiting some of these widows in the past. In a few months our bishop will join with the Bolivian bishop at this home to celebrate the progress made with our help. Additional needs remain, but this will finance one important step. Thank you for providing this essential comfort and safety for our Bolivian Methodists.

— Dave Harsh, for the Wisconsin Conference Bolivian Taskforce.

LUKE HOUSE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The aim of Luke House is simple: to provide a hot, nutritious meal in a safe, welcoming environment nine times a week. For anyone who shows up — no questions asked.

This past year, with generous support, Luke House has been able to successfully do just that, hundreds of times. In this first full year after Covid, we've seen substantial growth in the numbers of guests and meals served at Luke House.

Bethany United Methodist helps along with dozens of churches and other sponsoring groups in and around Madison to faithfully purchase and cook food, serve, eat, and clean up. It's done with dignity and grace, making Luke House a special place for both guests and volunteers to share a meal.

This work is solely supported by individual donations. Luke House receives no government assistance.

The need for meals, service and donations continues to grow.

Would you give a financial gift to the ongoing work of Luke House?

You can give a gift through Bethany by noting "Luke House"

You may also give the gift of service:

- Renew your commitment to Bethany's evening meal group who serve on the fifth Tuesday or fifth Thursday of the month (contact [Janet Daniel](#)) or volunteer to resurrect Bethany's noon meal group that ceased functioning when COVID arrived.
- Prepare a few meals a month to meet special volunteer needs. Join the mailing list to be notified through Signup Genius, an easy way to volunteer as a need arises. Send Sarah your email address to sarah@lukehousemadison.org.
- Tell a friend about Luke House. Invite them to join you for a meal, and to volunteer.





CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



Thank you to the children and adult helpers who shared the Christmas story in scripture and song on December 10 during worship. As our two narrators read the scripture passages, we enjoyed seeing Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, a donkey, shepherds, sheep, angels, magi, and a camel! Erin McConnell designed and built the camel, and three of our Bethany third graders cooperated together to make the camel trek around the sanctuary. Songs in the pageant were: *Little Drummer Child*, *Away in a Manger*, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, and *He Came Down*.





CHRISTMAS PAGEANT





CAROLING



An intergenerational group of 18 people from Bethany walked around the neighborhood singing carols and enchanting neighbors of all ages. The folks living in our area appreciated the efforts, with some even inviting the group inside. A final stop at the bookstore across the street where a shy child slowly came out of his shell to accompany us with jingle bells. Back at Bethany, the group enjoyed hot soup and snacks.





CHRISTMAS CANTATA & CHRISTMAS EVE



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

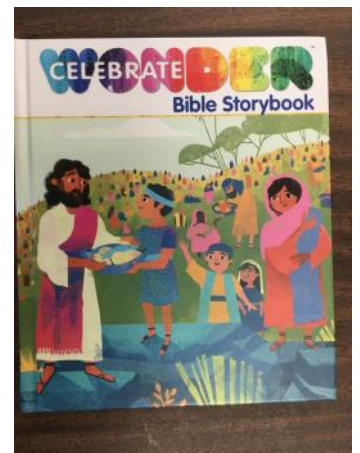
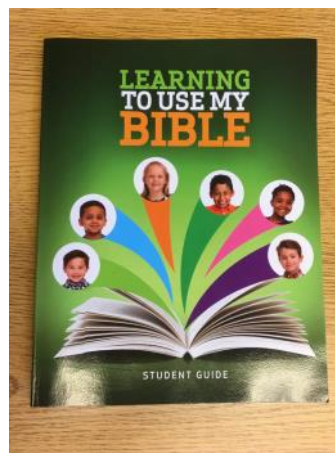
Beautiful Ornaments

The Christmas tree in the Sunday School hallway was decorated with ornaments created by the Sunday School children. Both hand-colored and jewel collage-style were fun to make!



Children's Sunday School

January sees the continuation of our Sunday School program. Children in preschool through first grade enjoy Bible stories and projects from the *Celebrate Wonder* curriculum. Our older students (Grades 4-6) are using a Cokesbury curriculum called *Learning to Use My Bible*. Sunday School takes place partway through the 10:00 am worship service. All children are welcome! Please check in with Ms. Lisa if you would like to serve the Bethany community by being an adult helper in this program.



Youth News

For Youth Ministry information, contact Kathy Mohs, Director of Youth Ministries
Phone: (608) 238-6381 / Email: Youth@BethanyMadison.org

Confirmation Updates

On November 19th, our confirmands joined with the confirmands and their mentors at First United Methodist Church for lunch and class. Our theme was Prayer, and we discussed the various ways we pray and how important the power of prayer is.

On December 17th, we enjoyed lunch and class and our theme was Worship. We discussed the importance of music in worship, as well as the meaning of the yearly liturgical colors, and the various elements in the sanctuary. Our three confirmands and their mentors also participated in worship on Dec. 17th, by reading the liturgy and lighting the advent wreath.

Looking ahead, on Jan. 19th, we will be heading to Temple Beth El to experience worship. We will also have class after worship on Jan. 21st.

Lastly, we will be participating in a ski/snowboarding trip to Tyrol Basin on February 9th for youth (grades 6 to 12), so be on the lookout for updates!



Attention Youth in grades 6-12!!

SAVE THE DATE!!

Friday, Feb. 9th

6-10 pm (tentative timing)

Skiing and Snowboarding at Tyrol Basin!!

More details to come in the weeks ahead, so stay tuned!

SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE (IN-PERSON AND YOUTUBE)

Sunday, 12/3	Sunday, 12/10	Sunday, 12/17	Sunday, 12/24	Sunday, 12/24 (eve)
Total 173	Total..... 186	Total..... 149	Total..... 107	Total 272



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

Information

Office Hours: 8 am - 2:30 pm, Monday — Friday

Church Office: (608) 238-6381

Email: BethanyOffice@BethanyMadison.org

Website: bethanymadison.org

Sunday Morning Schedule

Faithlink Adult Discussion Class 8:45 am

Coffee Fellowship 9:15 am

Worship (in person and on YouTube) 10:00 am

Coffee Fellowship Following Worship

Staff

Lead Pastor.....	Rev. Julie Wilson
Pastor of Visitation	Rev. Brad Mather
Deacon	Rev. Kory Douglass
Office Administrator.....	Carl White
Director of Children's Ministries & Music	Lisa Weaver
Youth Director	Kathy Mohs
Director of Music	Kristie Halverson
Organist.....	Sue Poullette
Director of Bell Choirs	Nick Bonaccio
Choral Program Collaborative Artist.....	Evan Lange
Membership Secretary.....	Kathy Doran
Financial Secretary	Sandra Arrington
Custodian.....	Ron Rebholz
Global Mission Partner	Temba Nkomozepe, Mujila Falls, Zambia

E-Banner Deadline: Fridays at Noon

Banner Deadline for the February Issue: January 22