



Ministry Report 2014

for the

Winter Congregational Meeting

February 1, 2015

Bethel

Lutheran Church & School

Bethel's Vision

I pray that, according to the riches of His glory, He may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. (Ephesians 3:16-17)

January 25, 2015

Dear Bethel Community,

I am very pleased to put into your hands this newest annual report. I hope that seeing what we have accomplished together in God's name will fill you with joy and that the visual memories of ministry events will refresh your memories.

The year 2014 has, indeed, been a full year at Bethel. We have prayed together, gathered around Christ's table together, studied God's word together, and served our neighbors in God's holy name. We have equipped our families to raise Christ-centered children. We have guided teen-agers and young adults towards fulfilling lives, and we have affirmed them as children of a loving God. We have quipped one another to share God's love in word and deed, and we have upheld one another in prayer. We have celebrated joyous milestones in each other's lives, and we have quietly sat with one another, held hands, and dried tears in homes and by hospital beds. Through it all, we have trusted that God's Spirit would guide us....and He has.


We are at the cusp of a change in pastoral leadership, away from a 2 1/2 year interim (with mostly one called pastor) to a better-staffed and stabile permanent arrangement which, I trust, will strengthen our community and enable us to move ahead with renewed strength. I look forward to Pr. Ben Bergren arrival at Bethel and to serving alongside him, and trust that you will welcome him and his family with open arms and hearts.

Pastor Ben is fortunate to join an amazing team of dedicated school and church staff. True, the majority of individual reports in this brochure have been written by lay volunteer ministry leaders, and we can't thank them enough for leading the ministries to which the Holy Spirit has led them. We must also bear in mind, though, that much of Bethel's ministries rests on the shoulders of paid staff who carry out their work with great skill and much love and enthusiasm for God's work and God's people. As a non-profit religious organization, we are unfortunately not able to pay them as much as they deserve and as much as they would earn in similar positions in the for-profit world. Please bear this in mind when you see them at work (in church and school), and don't forget to thank them for the amazing work that they do to advance God's cause in the world.

Among all the reports and figures, I'd like to draw your attention to one detail, in particular — to our current preschool enrollment (see page 5). Between the classrooms for 2, 3, and 4-year old children, we are now at our licensed capacity, which is determined by the square footage of our indoor and outdoor space. What a difference prayers and tenacity, combined with a renewed advertising strategies can make! There is a whole new spirit of optimism present among school staff which, I hope, will spill over into the rest of our church.

As the cultural and religious landscape of the United States is changing and we are becoming a more secular and culturally diverse nation, there will always be a need and a calling for Christ's Church. Bethel does not have the numerical strength that it used to have, but Bethel certainly does have spiritual strength in abundance. This is a strength that cannot be as easily measured, as our community's spiritual strength does not manifest in worship attendance statistics or budget figures. Rather, Bethel's spiritual strength can be measured in hours that our community has spent serving friends and neighbors—both near and far.

I invite you to read the enclosed ministry reports and reflect on the gifts that God has given YOU. The Bethel community is a tapestry of gifts and callings. I hope that this booklet will inspire you to put your God-given gifts to greater use.



Rev. Dr. Gabriele Schroeder
Associate Pastor

IN MEMORIAM

The Bethel family of faith has bid a final farewell to a number of dear members and a former pastor who have been part of our community for a long time and proclaimed the message of God's saving grace in word and deed. We wish to remember them in this report, acknowledge their gifts to this community, and thank God for their faithful service. We celebrated the earthly life of: Vera Finstad, Joan Muston, and Rev. David Place.

BAPTISMS

In 2014 we baptized the following children in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Colton Robert Anderson, Helen Wilke, Susanna Piper Peachey, and Olivia Diane Burch. One adult, Charlotte Wilkie, received the sacrament of Holy Baptism as adult.

NEW MEMBERS

In 2014, we welcomed the following individuals as new members to our congregation via transfer from other congregations: Lisa Onishi, Ron Kozoman, Cindy Zhang, William & Jennifer Kozoman, Randy Shattuck, Kathleen Adams, Lauren and Aiden Shattuck.

CONFIRMATIONS

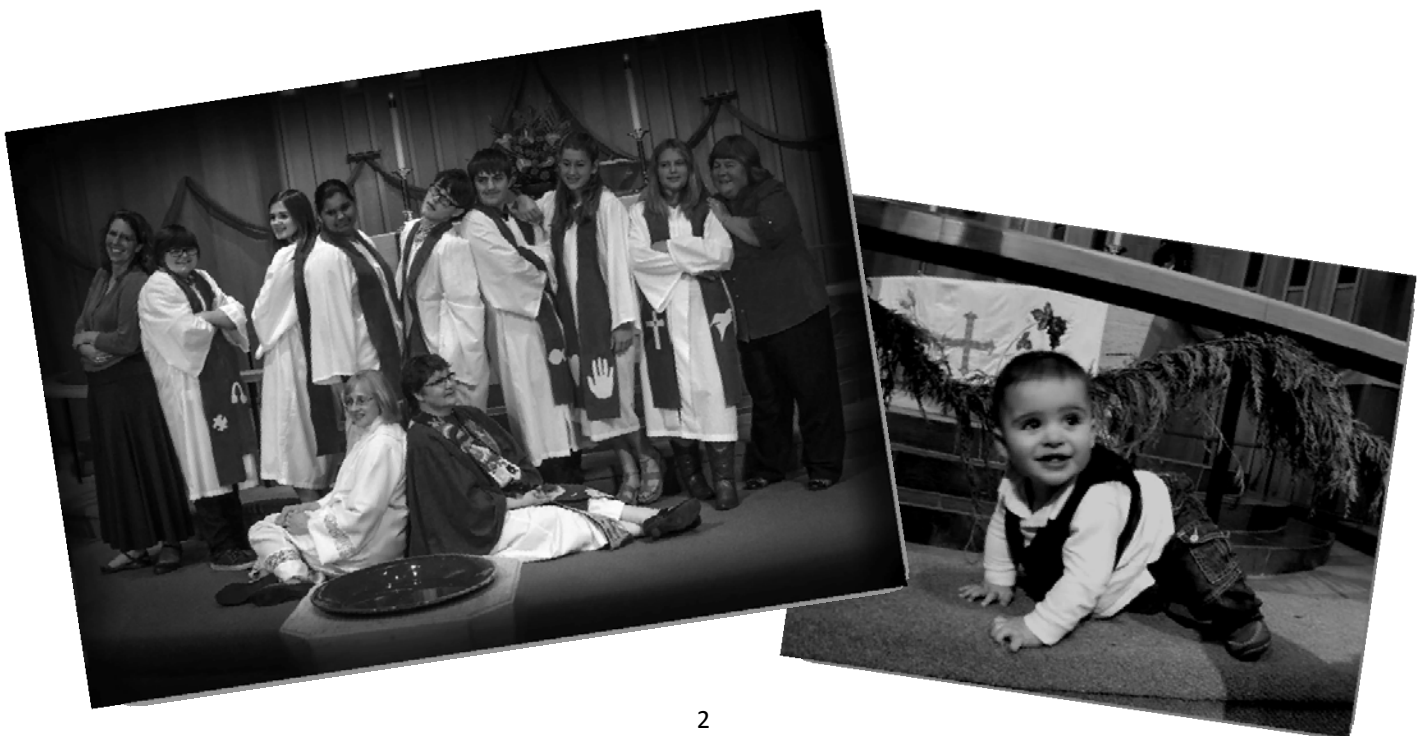
In 2014, the following Bethel youth affirmed their baptismal faith promises : Hannah Elena Fields, Naomi Karuna Dasari, Lauren Arlene Shattuck, Anna Elizabeth McKinney, Lindsey Rachel Laughlin, Mary Diana Shkouratoff, Anthony James Shioli, and Eric Michael Sauer.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS

In 2014, the following children celebrated their First Communion: Ryan Thomas Brown, Ashish Das, Jack Samuel Lingscheit, Olivia Mary Lingscheit, and Dana Wenjian Steinke.

FIRST BIBLE CLASS

In 2014, the following children attended First Bible classes and received their first "big kid Bible": their First Communion: Garrett Brown, Jessica Burkhart, Krystal Curtiss, Devynn Deutscher, and Jenell Laughlin.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Financial Officer: Eric Brown

Finance Committee Members: Laurie Bryson, Dave Tribby, Jack Wedgewood,

Stewardship Committee : Brett Deutscher, Scott Anderson

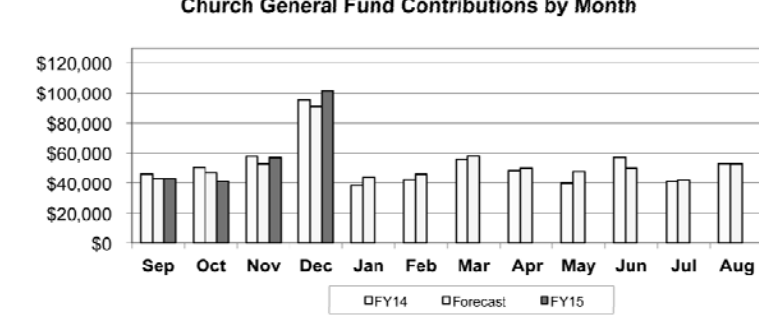
Audit Committee Members: Kathy Arnold, Tony Stieber

Parish Administrator: Fara Brock

In June, Eric Brown assumed the vacant position of financial officer. The fiscal year for 2015 (FY'15) began in September 2014. At that time giving was projected to stabilize and remain the same \$625,000 as FY'14. After the first four months of the fiscal year, giving was more than \$8,600 (3.7%) above where we expected it to be. December giving, in particular, was significantly above expectations and saw an increase over the previous year. At the August congregational meeting, the congregation passed a budget for FY'15 with a deficit of \$35,000. Despite this *budgeted* deficit, the actual spending is lower than budgeted, so that we are on track to complete the year without a deficit. This is primarily due to the increase in giving and the additional time without a new lead pastor.

The FY'15 income budget was built on the strong stewardship results and the facility use income negotiated by our business administrator, Fara Brock. The expense budget came together based upon the income available, cuts recommended by the Church Council task force, and continued tight expense control. Throughout the fall months, giving to the general fund was on track to meet the new budget of \$625,000 in giving to the general fund, and showed a modest increase over the previous year. After five years of declining giving, this is a welcome result.

Church General Fund Contributions by Month



Stewardship Data

	2014	2013	2012
Number of commitments returned	105	120	63
"Cannot commit now"	115	131	
Total of commitments	\$424,042	\$480,580	\$293,640
New commitments FY' 15:	8	(\$20,160)	

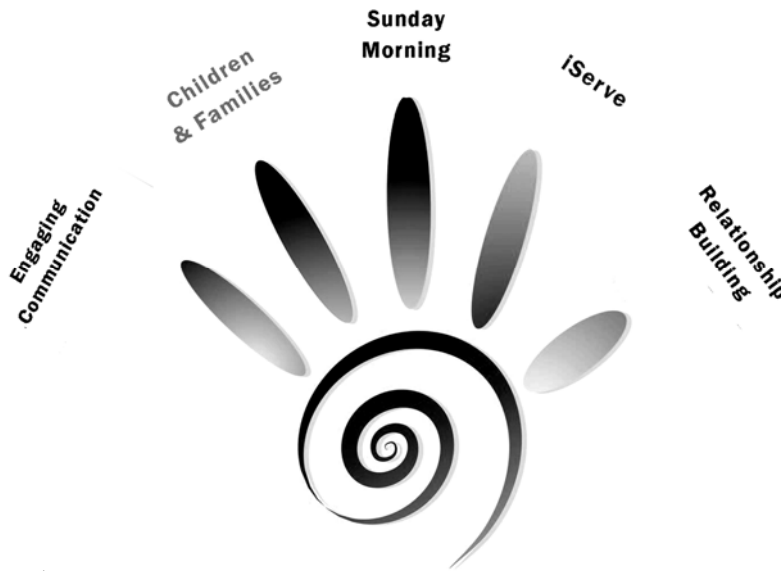


BETHEL MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS 2014

2014 MINISTRY THEMES: I AM STAYING IN THE BOAT

In 2014 Bethel aligned its ministry goals, stewardship, adult education, and mission outreach programs under the motto *I am Staying in the Boat*.

In result of the 2013 congregational self-study process, Bethel continues to pursue the following five ministry priorities:



DOROTHY MYERS AWARD

The recipient of Bethel's 2013 Dorothy Myers Award, presented at the Winter Congregational Meeting in February 2014, was David Arnold, in recognition of his dedicated volunteer service as Bethel's webmaster and in many other technology-related capacities.

SERVANT HEARTS OF THE MONTH

Each month in 2014, one ministry leader was featured in our bulletins, narthex, and eNewsletter issues. This gave our congregation the opportunity to get to know one another better, to learn from each other, and to be inspired by the faith and commitment of some among our outstanding leaders. All of these individuals have been nominated by their peers as someone who went above and beyond in serving the Bethel community. Nominations can be put into the nomination box in the entry. The following individuals have received Servant Heart of the month recognition in 2014.

January	Carol Olson (Sunday Afternoon at the Movies)
February	August Colandrea (Men of Monday and All Bethel Choir)
March	Anita Tysseland (Quilters and Mission Outreach Ministries)
April	Donna Cole (Quilters)
May	Dale Jones (Mission Outreach)
June	Eleanor Incerpi (Maundy Thursday White Breakfast)
July	Alice Isaacson (Mission Outreach Ministries)
August	Bethel Security Team
September	Elliot and Tillie Hinely (Deacons, Lectors, Ushers)
October	Robyn Winegardner (Youth, Bethel Lutheran School)
November	Lois Brouillette (Mission Outreach)
December	Barb Larsen (Children's Choir)

BETHEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL

School Board Chair: *Minnie Sudarsanam*

School Board Members: *Jenny Edstrom, Shandi Holder, Steve Klinger, Patrice Sera, Cathy Stahl, Robyn Winegardner, Kaisa Palomaki (moved away mid-year), Pr. Gabriele Schroeder*

Principal: *Marion Abney*

Mission Statement

“Bethel Lutheran School is a Christian school whose mission is to actively engage students in a strong academic and enrichment curriculum with the goal of developing the fundamental skills and unique talents of each student. Our experienced staff, along with dynamic programs, encourage faith development, increased self-confidence, creative expression, and compassion for others.”

2013-2014 Annual Theme

“Celebrate God’s Kingdom!”

2014-15 Bible Verse

“Jesus said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’” (Mark 10:14)



Enrollment Statistics

Current Total Enrollment: 134 (last year: 137)
 Current Preschool: 63 (last year: 48)
 Current Elementary: 71 (last year: 89)

Ethnicity:

Asian (non-Asian-Indian): 69%
 Caucasian: 18%
 Asian Indian: 7%
 Hispanic: 1%
 Mixed-Race: 5%

Religious Affiliation:

Christian: 70% (Bethel: 8 students)
 None: 7%
 No Information Given: 23%



Positive Enrollment Growth

- Our preschool enrollment has reached capacity at 65 preschoolers.
- Our new “Monkey” program two-year olds is full with frequent requests for enrollment.
- The 2015-2016 School Year enrollment forecast for Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten is strong.

Marketing Ventures

- Our new “mobile-device friendly” website has increased usage and contacts.
- Our new Yelp ad has increased tour requests.
- We welcome your recommendations on Yelp and by word of mouth.

50th Anniversary Celebration

Bethel Lutheran School is the outcome of Bethel Lutheran Church's heart for mission in 1964. This journey of faith has continued throughout our 50 year history. Thank you for your continued support!

You are invited to the
Bethel Lutheran School Anniversary Banquet
April 13, 2015
at the Saratoga History Club



Accreditation Update

This is the first year of our 3-year WASC accreditation process. Our accreditation goals are to increase cultural diversity in our leadership boards and update academic assessment strategies.

Mission Projects

Our chapel mission offerings have supported our godchild in Bolivia, purchased Bible books for a mission in Ghana, and pajamas for a local family shelter.

Special Thanks to

- The Men of Monday for their many weekly efforts to repair and improve our campus.
- Brad Martinson, Kumar Dasari, and Liz Tribby for their work on our technology systems
- Quilters for their donation of quilts for auction
- Bethel church members for their financial support throughout the year.



Participation Opportunities

- Worship with us on Wednesdays at our school chapel at 9:00am.
- Help young students practice reading.
- Help in the school library.
- Pray for our staff and students.



WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY

Ministry Leads: Tom McAvoy, Brian Schuette,

Visual Arts Coordinator: Liz Barton

Lead Usher: Jeanine Woodell

Coordinator of Deacons & Lectors: Mark Evashenk

Altar Guild: Lois Eid

Worship & Music Staff: Melody Bast (organ), Marina Dolgonosov (Piano Accompanist), David Herberg (All Bethel Choir), Chris Hogan (A Joyful Noise Bell Choir), Clayton Johnson (Contemporary Music Coordinator), Barbara Larsen (Seraph Choir, volunteer director), Elise Holst (Media Shout Designer), Tom Hoegel (AV Coordinator).

The active engagement of each and every one of us in Sunday morning worship enriches our lives and the community we serve. Please consider participating in one of the following Worship & Music ministries:

- Adult Choir, (“All Bethel”), Handbell Choir “A Joyful Noise”), and Children’s choirs rehearse weekly and provide special music at scheduled worship services.
- The Worship Team meets and practices periodically to integrate musical expressions into worship.

In 2014, several specially-themed worship services (such as a Latin Schubert Mass in Lent, iSERVE projects during outdoor worship, a special Palm Sunday service, the Berlin Wall Opening anniversary service, and the family-focused Christmas Eve service, as well as creative use of multi-media elements add unique worship experiences.



In addition to Bethel’s own talents, our

worship services are also enhanced by the contributions of guest choirs, in particular the Grace Notes a capella ensemble and the Mountain View Highschool Madrigals.

Thanks to all who also serve to make the worship services vibrant: pastors, musicians, visual arts folks, audio/visual support, altar guild and flower delivery, activity bags, ushers, greeters, deacons, students, youth, staff and active worshippers.



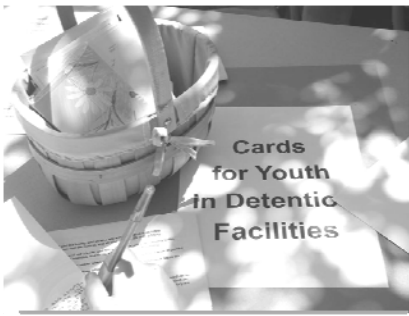
Maundy Thursday Breakfast

Started by the Priscilla Circle, the Maundy Thursday “White Breakfast” has been held in Torvend Hall for over 30 years, on the morning of Maundy Thursday, between 9:30am and 11:30am. The approximately 60 guests are seated around large, festively set tables, arranged in the form of a cross. The breakfast is held as a communion service, presided over by one of the pastors and including the passing and breaking off of the loaf of bread. The menu consists of Priscilla Strata, fruit, and a hot cross bun, along with coffee or tea. Music is provided in recent years by Barbara Larsen and Melody Bast. The meal could not happen without the contributions of many volunteers: those who help set up the tables, prepare the mead, serve the food, and help clean the place. We ask that reservations (\$6) be made in advance.





WORSHIP & MUSIC MEMORIES



MISSION OUTREACH MINISTRY

Mission Outreach Committee: Lisa Onishi, Dale Jones, Lois Brouillette

With your help, during 2014, we continued our **focus** on ...

Children: by purchasing gifts for the Giving Tree for foster children served by Help One Child

Clothing: by collecting clothes for the Clothes Closet at Immanuel Lutheran Church in San Jose and for the Sunnyvale FISH Junque Sale, by sewing quilts for Lutheran World Relief and for residents of the San Jose Family Shelter

Education: by financially supporting our ministries in Tanzania: the AIDS orphans at Bethel School in Himo (Pastor Godbless), the New Life Band in Arusha, and Operation Bootstrap Africa in Monduli

Housing: by building two homes in Sunnyvale for Habitat for Humanity, by working with Esperanza in Mexico building homes in communities surrounding Tijuana, by opening the doors of our Stelling site to the men of the Rotating Shelter

Hunger: by serving breakfasts at the San Jose Family Shelter, by serving dinners to men in the Rotating Shelter, by collecting non-perishable food and frozen turkeys for the Lord's Pantry at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, by sorting food at Second Harvest Food Bank, by gleaning food at the Cupertino Farmer's Market for West Valley Community Services

The Incarcerated: by volunteering with the Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy (CIC) of Santa Clara County

With your help, on **iServe Sundays**: we cleaned up Stevens and Calabasas Creeks, covered books and made labels for the BLS library, made fleece blankets for shelter animals, purchased diapers for low-income families, collected backpacks for foster children, made cards for service men and women and for homebound Bethel members, made dresses for girls around the world, prepared Easter Eggs for our Cupertino community, assembled Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief, collected iPods for those with dementia, made and distributed kits for the homeless on our streets.

With your help, we will focus on **"the least of these"** in our community in 2015. Thank you, Bethel Congregation, for all the amazing things you do!



MISSION OUTREACH: QUILTS

Ministry Lead: Joann Weberg

Another aspect of Bethel's outreach ministry are the many quilts that our congregation is able to distribute to people in need — locally, nationally, and internationally. This year, for example, the receiving groups include: LWR, Esperanza International, Bethel Lutheran School, Bethel Lutheran Church (Labor Day Retreat), First Emmanuel COME, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Habitat for Humanity, Heritage House, Palo Alto VA (for homeless vets), San Jose Family Shelter, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center ICN, South Hayward Parish, Faith in Actin Silicon Valley Rotating Shelter (Stelling Site), Stonecroft Ministry, Sunny View Retirement Community. In addition, the quilters also contributed 111 backpacks to be used through the LWR.



Our quilters were able to produce an truly astounding number of quilts: a total number of 285 quilts (230 large and 55 small. Over they years, the group has made a impressive total of 3,414 quilts.

EVANGELISM/CARING MINISTRY

Ministry Lead: Joanne Stensaas

Pastor of Care & Visitation: Rev. Ken Bancroft

Adult Ministry Coordinator: Patricia Myerholtz

Sunshine Team – continues to send birthday cards to all members on their respective birthdays. More volunteers are always welcome to help with this project. Cards are being sent to all on the prayer list.

There has been a positive response by most receiving flowers, but we can always use more people who can drop off flowers on Sunday afternoon. This is a great service opportunity that won't take much time.

Visitor Follow-up — visitors worshipping at Bethel are being responded to by email or card within 48 hours. A gift is available in the Narthex for all visitors.

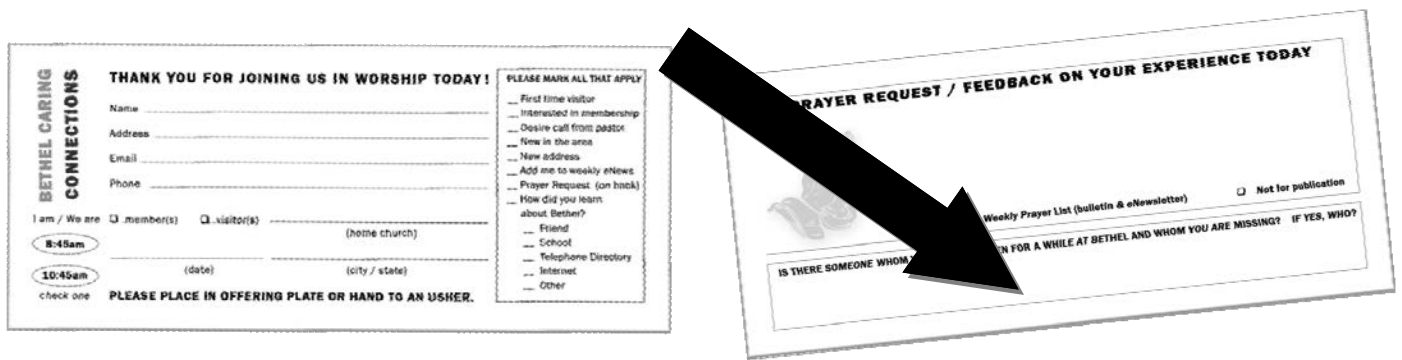
The PrayerBytes Network is a newly-launched ministry, dreamed up and organized by Robyn Winegardner, in which individuals can opt into getting a daily email with a list of "byte" size prayer requests taken from the Sunday insert. This ministry began due to requests for making the prayer list easier to handle and less overwhelming on a daily basis. Robin presented the ministry to us at our June meeting. The new ministry seems to be helping members focus on and personalize their prayer time.

Stephen Ministry/Caring Connections

Stephen Ministers continue to meet the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm in the Fireside Room. At 7:30pm the Caring Connection members join us. Most participants are members of both groups.

Prayer concerns are shared in our monthly meetings.

Relationships between Stephen Ministry caregivers and care receivers are prayerfully considered and resources shared with confidentiality.



A training session for new Caring Connection members was held in April. Continuing members were also invited in order to review the concepts from the original training.

We brainstormed about ideas on how to make Caring Connection known to all Bethel small groups in order to encourage more personal relationships among members and to gather information regarding those needing encouragement around attendance and other concerns.

An annual Stephen Ministry Fall kick-off dinner was held in September with 15 in attendance. Stephen Ministers and Caring Connection ministers will continue to work together to note who has been missed at worship services for a few weeks or have other needs that have been shared with us.

Our ultimate goal is to have all members participate in “keeping in touch” with other members through telephone calls, emails, socializing after or between services or other 1:1 contacts.

Stephen Ministry and Caring Connection shared a table of information at the Ministry Fair.

Pastor Ken will continue to participate in Stephen Ministry and Caring Connection meetings on a volunteer basis as he is able.

Goals for 2015

1. Continue and expand the Caring Connection ministry, ultimately to the whole congregation. Perhaps meeting with small groups in order to clarify the ministry and get further ideas as we brainstormed in 2014 should be pursued.
2. Continue the birthday card ministry and recruit more volunteers. (Sunshine Team)
3. Keep encouraging all worship participants to fill out the Caring Connection cards in the pews each Sunday.
4. Encourage more members to participate in the PrayerBytes Network.
5. Work towards the goal that all members would feel that the congregation cares about them personally.



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Children's Ministry Leads: Corinne Devine, Patrice Sera

Children's Ministry Coordinator: Amanda Laughlin

4th-6th Grade Group Leaders: Jill & Bob Burkhart



Kid Connection

- Average 25 children per week (preschool-6th grade)
- 9 regular teachers who included sr. high school youth and young adults: Amber Myerholtz, Josh Myerholtz, Lauren Hadding, Lynne Stasi, Alice Isaacson, Kristine Liu, Minnie Sudarsanam, Bret Deutscher, Carol Wheaton
- Substitute teacher: Amanda Boniface and Jamie Laughlin
- Fun and Captivating Kid Connection opening- Music and Skits- led by Erin Woodell, Amelia Wheaton and Abby Wheaton
- Offering goes toward Bethel's designated fund of the month

Christmas program – "The Right Way" written by Randy Shattuck

- About 24 children and youth participated – (preschool – youth)
- Directed by Randy Shattuck and produced by Amanda Laughlin



Vacation Bible School 2014 – Weird Animals

- Combined program with BLS
- More than 60 participants (preschool-6th grade)
- 50 - Jr. High, High School, and adult volunteers throughout the week

First Communion Classes

- Spring/Lent Class: 4 children along with their parents participated; led by Amanda Laughlin
- Fall Class: 5 children participated along with their parents participated; led by Angela Brown

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First Bible Class

- Fall Class: 4 children participated along with their parents; led by Amanda Laughlin



Nursery

- Great team – Laverne Hayden, Cindy Rivera, and Amber Myerholtz



YOUTH MINISTRY

Marianne Nadell, Mark Evashenk
High School Youth Volunteers

Common Ground Sponsors

Jr. High Youth Volunteer

Confirmation, Affirmation of Baptism

Common Ground Director

Youth Director

Youth Assistants

Ministry Leads

*Molly Schrey, Brett Deutscher,
Rich Teed, Marianne Nadell, Leah Thomas*

*Elissa Barton, Brett Deutscher,
Jamie Jacobson, Adam Klopfenstein, Chris
Larsen, Brian Schuette, Adam Klopfenstein,
David Schrey, Molly Schrey, Leah Thomas,
Chris Larsen, Katlynn Hoegel*

Jeannine Woddell

Robyn Winegardner, Susan Leavitt

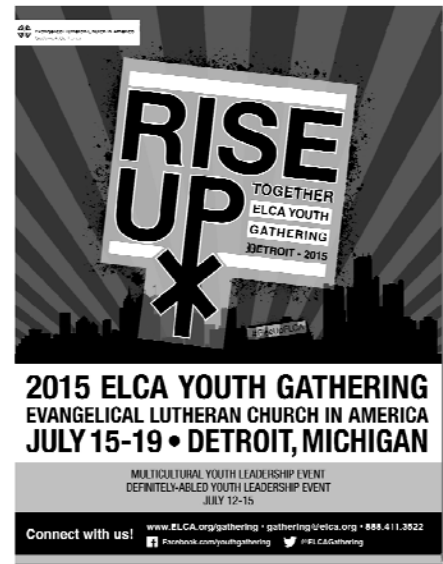
Katlynn Hoegel

Tom Hoegel

Charlotte Wilkie, Rachel Sudarsanam,

Mel Brouillette (2013-14)

Spencer Choate and Emilie Schott (2014-15)



What a ride! Beginning in 6th grade through College, our youth are encouraged to "Love Like Jesus." While this may sound like just a catchy slogan, it is really a challenge to each of us to refrain the way we look at our place in the world. We encourage a balance of fellowship, service, learning, and worship, all the while finding lots of room for joy and laughter. Our Ministry Leads are Marianne and Mark, while our lead staff are Katlynn, Robyn, Susan, Marianne, and Molly. Along with this group are dozens of young adults and parents that give hundreds of hours. We could not do this without you :-)

"Light in the Darkness"

This year's youth group theme is "Light in the Darkness". We are talking about the many ways that darkness is found in our world today and need for God's love and light. Our job isn't to be the light, but rather to reflect God's light to everyone around us. You will get a chance to witness this message first hand through our Common Ground concerts this coming June. Our challenge is to be Christ to those who we encounter: "Love Like Jesus."

"Rise Up"

One large adventure we are embarking on this coming summer is the National Youth Gathering in Detroit. We will gather with 36,000 youth and adults from all over the United States and beyond to sing praise, worship, learn, serve and generally have an awesome week. There will be many opportunities to support us in the coming months including an auction/night of fun in March and an Electronics Recycling drive as well. Please support us with your prayers and dollars.





Bethel WELCA Leader: Cindy Arnett

This year Cindy finished out her service of 4 years as the president of the WELCA for the Sierra Pacific Synod. In July 2014 she was elected to serve as a delegate at the 11th Triennial Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Cindy was also elected to serve on the WELCA National Executive Church-wide Board for the next two years during which time she will be traveling to various synods across the country to help with women's conventions, doing workshops, leading Bible studies, and delivering messages from the national WELCA organization.

This year we made close to 100 fleece tied blankets for the homeless and their pets. We participated in the iServe Sunday ministry outreach and made blankets for homeless pets. Our Sierra Pacific Synod WELCA president Linnea Laufer attended our event.

In October we held a Women's Day Out, building community with a trip to Peace Lutheran in Danville, enjoyed the famous artwork displayed in the church, walked the labyrinth, we had an opportunity for meditation, enjoyed lunch together at a local restaurant and played Reformation Bingo.

On January 31, 2015 we are having a women's health retreat where we will learn about various women's health issues and healthy living. Nurse practitioner Barb Dehn, will educate us on issues like menopause, pre-menopause and diabetes and Dr. Mindy Pelz will talk about healthy life styles and prevention. We will have a follow up activity where Dr. Mindy Pelz will take us to a local market to learn about shopping and cooking healthy organic food. We will organize walking groups at our event.

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

Discipleship Ministry Lead: Kathy Arnold

Library Team Chair: Margaret Lund

Adult Ministry Coordinator: Patricia Myerholtz

Our Growing in Faith Ministry addresses the portion of our mission statement that states "Grow and Equip one another as devoted followers of Jesus Christ".

The Bethel library equips our congregation to grow their Faith by managing over 3,000 books and 250 videos/DVDs. During the year, 91 new items were added to the collection, many having been donated. The annual Used Book Sale was held in the Spring, and National Friends of the Library Week was celebrated in October. The goal remains to see an increased use of our fine library.

We can grow our Faith by deepening our knowledge of the Bible and Lutheranism. The member-led groups are: Women of Wednesday, Saturday Women's Bible Study, and Martha Bible Study. These groups have been studying God's word for years and welcome anyone would like to join. In addition to these on-site groups, there are a few other groups that meet offsite.

Food & Fellowship go together. The Wednesday night, Fun with Faith events comprise a light supper followed by a one hour class. Each session typically lasts three weeks, beginning in the Fall and ending at Lent. This year, 13 classes will be held under one of the general themes of "Bible Study", "Life Skills", or "The Arts". The total class attendance (unless the Giants are in the playoff) ranges from 12 to 35.

The newest addition to our Discipleship ministry, Sunday Adult Bible Study, focusses on a single topic in depth over a period of several weeks. This Fall, we wrapped up "The Story" with Randy Frazee. The current study is Ray Vander Laan's Bible study lessons complementary video footage from the Holy Land. The nearly year round Sunday study averages 35 attendees per Sunday.



CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Members: Erik Edstrom, Rachel Sudarsanam, Ordetta Hovland, Janice Martinson, Doreen Baldwin, Angela Brown, Ann Marie Kenitzer, Brian Hadding, Dana Torgersen (until Fall 2014)

- Received first slate of candidate names in early 2014.
- We conducted skype and in-person interviews.
- Received the 2ND slate of names in late 3rd quarter 2014.
- Call Committee unanimously agreed on a candidate.
- Began introduction of Pastor Ben Bergren at the end of November.
- Conducted a meet and greet with Pastor Ben in early December.
- Officially recommended Pastor Ben Bergren at congregation meeting.
- Congregation voted to call Pastor Ben Bergren as Bethel's Lead Pastor.
- Pastor Ben accepted our call.
- He will begin at Bethel February 17th with his first Sunday February 22nd.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

Ministry Lead: Sue Jacobus

Adult Ministry Coordinator: Patricia Myerholtz

Congregational Life had many wonderful events happen this past year. Highlights included:

- **The amazing art fair "In Gods Garden"** where participants enjoyed live music, food, a labyrinth lined by hand decorated rocks, and amazing art work including a beautiful water fountain. Thank you Sue Jacobus and team!
- **Community Easter Egg Hunt** that gets bigger every year--thank you to all who filled over 3,000 eggs! And, the many volunteers who made the event possible.
- **Evergreens** continues to grow and enjoy Bingo, devotions, and this year an outing to Santa Cruz for lunch. Thank you Shirley Gross for helping to contact the members.
- **Our 4th of July Picnic** continues to be a great outreach event. Thank Tom Hoegel and Sue and Jim Jacobus for their help.
- **Fun with Faith** highlights included great teachers, homemade food, and a wonderful Scandinavian Christmas Party! Thank you to Kathy Arnold for leading this ministry.
- **Our annual Ministry Fair** was a success with many new volunteers getting involved in different ministries. Thank you to Trish Cunningham for her help with this.
- **Readers Anonymous** continues to be a great outlet for avid readers with wonderful discussions. Thank you to Kathy Arnold for leading this.
- **Ladies Night Out** has been a great ministry to bring together all ladies of all ages for fellowship and fun events. Thank you to Angela Brown for leading this.
- **Nativity display** this year has grown into the fireside room and was a big hit and will continue this year. Thank you to Pastor Gabi for planting the seed and Sue Jacobus for leading it.
- **Out and About** continues to be able to have at least one event come together every month and this past year. There were outings to Santa Cruz Sailing, San Francisco Art Walk, Beer Tasting, and more! Thank you to Molly Schrey, Tom Hoegel, Paul Baldwin, Jules Kurtz, and Marianne Nadell for making this happen.
- **Supper Club:** We are in need of a volunteer to restart the Supper Club Ministry. Contact Patricia Myerholtz



MEMORIES
FROM
BETHEL'S
CONGREGATIONAL
LIFE
MINISTRY



Labor Day Retreat: led by Molly Schrey, Liz Barton, and Tom Hoegel.

Bethel once again held its annual Labor Day Retreat at Mt. Cross in the beautiful Santa Cruz mountains. The theme of this year's retreat was "Ubuntu," which is an African word that means "I am because We are." This year's speakers, Tyler Freckmann and Molly Schrey, lead our community in an exploration of what it means to live in community with one another - accepting each other's weaknesses and embracing each other's gifts - through some dramas and interactive sessions. Activities included hiking, pool time, archery, Variety Show, Bethel Olympics, campfire, and, of course, the Polar Bear Swim. We thank the Mt. Cross staff and all those on the Labor Day Retreat Committee who helped plan the event, and we invite anyone interested to help us with the next retreat. We can't wait until next year!

Family Fellowship: There were ice cream socials, Fall Festival, and an old fashioned Christmas Party. Fun was had by many.

MEN OF MONDAY

Ministry Leads: Tom Cole, August Colandrea

Facilities

- Repair and upkeep of all structures
- General plumbing and fixtures including faucets, drains, dishwasher, toilets, and sinks
- Repaired walls, windows, and floors
- Repaired doors, hinges, and locks
- Repaired furniture and pews
- Service electrical systems, lighting, and switches
- Service heating and ventilation equipment
- Assisted with Torvend Hall remodeling

Landscaping and Grounds

- Trimmed trees, shrubs, and plants
- Cleared storm drains around campus
- Cleared roof drains and downspouts
- Repaired fences and gates
- Repaired lawn sprinkler system
- Fixed playhouses, toys and playground equipment



Come join us as we maintain the Lord's house!

FROM THE FACILITIES SUPERVISOR

Facilities Supervisor (part-time): Tom Hoegel

Here are some highlights from the facilities world but, before I give you specifics I want to let you know how I view the facilities and grounds at Bethel. All of our efforts are not simply for the sake of our place being pretty or technologically advanced. It is all to invite more people to experience the love of Christ anew. There are people around you everyday that need to hear that news. It might be a stranger who has never set foot in a church, it might be a co-worker or neighbor who is struggling, or it might be a person who has left the church community for whatever reason. We have a beautiful facility and an awesome promise of love and acceptance from Christ. Let's make sure we share. 😊

Ok, here are some facility specifics from this past year:

- Torvend Hall fire renovation
- Installation of BLC Annual Fund Brick Project
- Parking lot re-sealing
- Green Biz Project: re-lamping, Flow restrictors, recyclables/compostable/trash, HVAC system tune-ups, paper, chemicals, cleaners, paper goods, and waste collection bags.

- Narthex welcome project started
- Started meeting with the Torvend Hall TLC Team
- General cleanup
- Support Men of Monday ministry 😊

Projects for this coming year:

- Complete the narthex project
- Remodel Zoar Hall bathrooms
- Investigate electric car charging stations on parking lot
- Finish the “Wedgewood Walkway” (Jack 😊)
- Begin Fireside Room refresh
- Begin Torvend Hall TLC Project
- General cleanup
- Support Men of Monday: I need say no more 😊

Well, I think that should do it for now. If you want details or if you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please get a hold of me. Once again, we are blessed with an awesome campus and we want it to provide a fertile place to share God’s love with all who come here.



TECHNOLOGY MINISTRY

Ministry Leads: Liz Tribby, Brad Martinson

Web Master: Dave Arnold

Bethel Wireless Networking Taskforce: Liz Tribby, Brad Martinson, Kumar Dasari

The rollout of Bethel’s wireless network continued this past year. We struggled with some performance issues in Zoar Hall, which were addressed thanks to a generous equipment donation from a school parent. Torvend Hall had some connection issues as well, probably due to latent effects from the fire in 2013. A replacement cable was run to Torvend Hall, which greatly improved reliability.

In the office, we purchased and installed 3 new PCs to replace aging computers, and started using Carbonite to back up our most important files. Carbonite gives us automated, off-site, secure backup for our financial and membership data.

Bethel's hosting service reports an increase in traffic for 2014 over 2013. We had 80,000 visits and served 191,000 pages. The top three pages were sermon podcasts, calendar, and the Bethel home page.

GREETINGS FROM LAVINNIA PIERSON, INTERIM PASTORAL ASSISTANT

Dear Friends, it has been a joy to serve among you over the past year. During this interim time, I have been able to assist Bethel and Pastor Gabi in a variety of ways. My contracted position has given me opportunity to have done the following:

- Led mid-week Lenten services of “Prayer around the Cross”.
- Assisted the Library Team.
- Beginning in July; led worship and preached an average of two times per month (incl. 15 Sundays & 2 Christmas Eve services).
- Led 2 Fun With Faith classes: “You are Gifted: Gift Based Ministry” and “Table and Font: An ELCA Study”.
- Led 2 Evergreen devotions.
- Attended weekly staff meetings and other meetings as needed.
- Provided pastoral care as needed.
- Assisted with 2 memorial services for Bethel family members.
- Provided leadership/coordination for the Scandinavian Christmas Party event.



I am grateful to be available to serve Bethel and to be able to assist Pastor Gabi in this interim time.

I look forward to where ever God leads next.

Blessings, *Lavinia Pierson*

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2014 CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Mark Evashenk (President), Victor Chinn (Project Management Advisor), Trish Cunningham (Ministry Liaison), Nick Arnett (President Elect), Donna Kuester (HR Advisor), Leah Thomas (Youth Member-at-Large), Minnie Sudarsanam (School Board Chair), Mary Thomas (Communications Officer), Dave Tribby (Senior Member-at-Large), Eric Brown (Financial Officer), Robyn Winegardner (Member-at-Large)

January

- Welcome to Mel Brouillette as newest addition to Council!
- Several council positions remain vacant, including president-elect, financial officer, and member-at-large. Additional positions within various committees and ministries are also open.
- Agenda for Congregational meeting was finalized.
- Status of school repairs was summarized.

February

- Council warmly welcomed Robyn Winegardner as new member-at-large.
- Approved request to authorize Hella Bluhm-Stieber to sign checks in absence of President. (due to lack of Fiscal Officer).
- Accepted list of members as inactive.
- Plan for Leadership Retreat to convene 3/22; focus on planning for another set of small group meetings and continued focus on five areas for ministry: communication, iServe, family, Adult Bible Study, Worship.

March

- Approved funding a project to re-light the campus using LED bulbs wherever possible. Replacement costs will be off-set by a grant from PG&E and should substantially lower our utility bills.
- Reviewed activities to retool our HVAC systems to increase energy conservation. New programmable thermostats have been installed in select areas which prohibit over-rides of preset temperatures.
- Our church giving has fallen below budget for two consecutive months. While expenditures are also lower, Council feels it important that the congregation be informed of this so that consideration to maintain giving is made and hopefully offset a new financial challenge.

April

- Welcome to Nick Arnett as president-elect.
- Bethel placed full-color ad in Cupertino Courier.
- Reviewed proposals to improve financial management.
- Reviewed Victor Chinn's report on local churches renting space.
- Repairs on Torvend classrooms are underway.

May

- Call committee identified a candidate whom they recommend to extend the call as Lead Pastor.
- WASC accreditation for BLS went well.
- Staff position descriptions completed.

June

- A warm welcome to Eric Brown, who has agreed to serve as Fiscal Officer.
- Discussed various foundational considerations for developing FY 2015 budget.
- Discussed factors needed to establish a rental agreement with Living Hope Congregation.
- School website is being revised; the new format will be accessible from mobile devices and also relevant search engines which will strengthen our marketing strategy.

August

- Discussed and approved a budget for FY 2015.
- Welcomed the Shattuck family as 'official' members of Bethel Lutheran Church.
- Discussed the importance of continuing to pursue other rental options via personal networking.

September

- Call Committee is interviewing two candidates in person for the Lead Pastor Position.
- Approved renaming the account for contingency funds to more accurately reflect the use of this fund.
- Approved developing a similar contingency fund for Bethel Lutheran School (using funds reimbursed from loss of income associated with arson fire incident).
- Approved changing our check deposit system to an on-site check scanning method.
- BLS Walkathon was very successful.
- Repairs to the preschool completed; Contractor Marvin Davis very responsive to Bethel's needs

October

- Council agreed to work on financial package for Lead Pastor.
- Revised and renamed Reserve DNA account to Church Contingency DNA account; established School Contingency DNA account.
- Green-Biz project almost completed.
- Decline in Youth Group reflects decline in church attendance; fewer youth from which to draw within the congregation.

November

- The final payment to the contractor for fire-related repairs to Torvend was made.
- Council asked that the Finance Committee to provide recommendations regarding use of funds from the Stelling site
- Council decided that the Technology & Administration Ministry has completed its work and need not continue at this time.
- Incorporating and updating technology for the school will become an issue in the near future.
- Council encourages all Bethel members to participate in the i-Serve Sunday on November 30.

December

- Approved a "New & Renewing Ministry Fund" from excess income resulting from Stelling-site management.
- Approved Resolution for Pr. Gabi's housing allowance for calendar year 2015.
- Established a "transition task force" to assist Pr. Gabi in changing roles as we move forward with a new lead pastor.
- Approved tuition rate at 3% for the next school year at Bethel Lutheran School. Additional monies will be used for establishing a technical curriculum and a Learning Resource Center.
- Thanked Pastor Gabi, Bethel staff, and all the worship & Music ministry teams for an exciting and meaningful Advent season!
- Requested that members forward names of individuals whom they feel could serve Bethel in the following capacity: President-Elect, Ministry Liaison, Project Manager, School Board Chair. Names should be given to a member of the nominating committee: Sam Sudarsanam, Hella Bluhm-Stieber, & Jack Wedgwood.

In 2014, Victor Chinn, Project Management Advisor to the Council, worked on the following projects:

- Cutting Cost of Telephone System: Worked with the Church Administrator, Fara Brock, in search of competitive telephone companies with better bids for the Bethel Telephone and Alarm System contract.
- Sharing of Church Facilities with Another Church: Interviewed a number of churches in the area that are now sharing their facilities with other groups of Christians to determine the schedule conflicts, tax consequences in renting facilities, rental rates, liabilities, etc.
- Cell Tower Feasibility Study: Searching churches that have Cell Towers installed on their properties and interviewing them of the details involved in getting such a project started and completed successfully. Thus far, I have only interviewed one church (thanks to Fara Brock's tip) that has a Cell Tower installed (West Valley Presbyterian Church, Cupertino).



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