

Bethel Lutheran Church

2020 Annual Report

Hospitality to All
Christ Centered Community
Spiritual Growth and Discipleship
Generosity
Responding to Needs



Greetings Members and Friends of Bethel Lutheran Church,

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13).

As I think about the year 2020 and all that has happened with the people and ministry at Bethel, this verse seems very fitting. Living with COVID-19 and all the limits that were placed on our ability to gather at Bethel, we needed to look for other ways to continue a vibrant ministry.

The staff, the ministry leaders, the worship planners and participants, the church council, the technology workers and many more all stepped up to make this a very good, meaningful, and productive year. Alongside all this the Call committee worked hard to prepare for calling a new lead pastor. We know this could not have all happened without the guidance and presence of the Holy Spirit and a lot of hard work by many people.

As you read through all the ministry team reports you will see the creativity, commitment and sheer energy that was needed to make all these various ministries continue serving the people of Bethel, the local community and beyond. Thus, Bethel was able to come through and enter 2021 as a very strong and vibrant congregation. I give a big thank you to all of you for your time, resourcefulness, and teamwork.

Sunday Worship and most children's and youth events took place virtually. The Confirmation program continued with five students being confirmed early last summer. We had one wedding last summer along with lots of creative social events taking place throughout the year. Once again most everything took place virtually, which worked amazingly well with great technological support.

The adult education program continued strong throughout the year focusing on anti-racism and social justice issues the last few months. I feel this is really important with the continuing racial tension and racial injustices that plague our communities, nation and yes even our Christian churches. I am grateful for the willingness of the congregation and members to be supporting and participating in this difficult and sometimes painful journey to greater understanding, and freedom for all God's children.

As I said earlier, this was not the kind of year we expected, but, with commitment, creativity, and hard work, we continue to be God's Church and God's people here at Bethel "Doing Life Together." I, and I trust you as well, are expecting even greater things to happen in the days, months, and years ahead!

Blessings and Peace!

Pastor Don

Bethel At-A-Glance

Baptisms: None.

New Members: We welcomed new individuals to our congregation: Sherryl Fawx and Andrew Imbrie, Margit Schmitt (reinstatement), Matt Santos (reinstatement).

Confirmations: The following Bethel youth affirmed their Baptismal Faith Promises: Ashish Das, Devynn Rae Deutscher, Noah Keish, Jenell Laughlin, and Benjamin Nicholas Schmitt.

First Communion Class: None.

First Bible Distribution: The following children received their first Bible: Luke Barto, Eleanor Edstrom, and Olivia Greene.

In Memoriam: We said goodbye to Mary Kellenberg, Ken Hill, Betty Danielsen, JoAnne Conly, Erwin Walz.

We honor the following Ministries who could not meet this year.



Altar Guild
Audit Committee
Breakfast at the San Jose Family Shelter
Christmas Choir Event
Coffee Hosts
Common Ground Tour
Martha Circle
Egg Hunt
First Wednesday Speaker Series
Greeters and Ushers
Life Touch Photos & Directory
Martha Circle
Media Shout "Spacebar Team"
Men of Monday
Mission to Mexico, Youth & Adult Trips
New Member Classes
Offering Counters
Rock-N-Water
Security Volunteers
Spring Choir Event
Summer Book Read
White Breakfast
Vacation Bible School

Adult Ministry — Patricia Myerholtz

February 14th of this year marks 11 years of me being given the gift of overseeing many of the great Bethel fellowship events and many of its ministries. When COVID-19 hit I had to rethink of how my position can continue to work in bringing people together when they could not come *together*. It was heart breaking. As time went by, I was overwhelmed by how Bethel ministries and God's love and grace overcame that heartache by the determination of all our volunteers, love for each other, love for the world, and love of Jesus.

It has filled my heart to see all the ways Bethel members continued to show their love for each other and the world through their hard work and love for Jesus. Jesus's presence continued to be felt through all of the many opportunities Bethel was able to put together by adapting to the COVID-19 restrictions: Ministry Gathering *You are the key in keeping the Bethel doors of opportunity open*, Virtual Out 'n Abouts, Advent Kits, Caring Connection ministry, Distribution of Pumpkin kits to Evergreens, Wednesday Night Adult Education Hour, Sunday Coffee Hour, Women of Wednesday Meetings, Readers Anonymous Zoom meetings, Distribution of Advent Kits to Evergreens, Men of Monday Meetings, Quilters

sending off hundreds of quilts all around the world, Help One Child, all the different Mission Outreach projects, Labor Day Retreat, Candle Lit prayer Zoom time, Christmas Worship with Communion Cups and even Supper Club continued to meet!



I would also like to lift up the following examples of how our Bethel family has continued to be a family through these virtual/visual

experiences: Smile, Share Love, and Share Peace Challenge, Palm Sunday Frond Spears, Mother's Day Flower Photos, Nativity Display Photos, Decorated Christmas Stars Photos, Art Fair Exhibits.

All this could not have continued to be possible without *all* our Bethel family and amazing volunteers who continue to inspire me every day! Yes, there has been much missed this year but there has also been so much gained, we gained the knowledge that we have the love, determination, and God's love and grace to get us through anything and what a great feeling that is! We are all so very blessed to have each other and we should all be very proud for keeping our Bethel family together through this all!

I pray many of you will feel called to be a part of the many opportunities through volunteering when an event comes up such as Advent and when given the opportunity to

share when video opportunities come up and be open to attend the many Zoom events that have helped us stay connected. I will never take for granted this wonderful blessing I have had in serving you all and sharing this life's journey with you all!

Children's Ministry & Nursery — Amanda Laughlin

Until the COVID-19 in-person restrictions were implemented, our Children's Ministries were actively supported and attended. I would like to thank the teachers who made this possible: Patrice Sera, Lauren Burch, Amanda Boniface, Carol Wheaton, Amber Funsten, Alice Issacson, Lynne Stassi, Rachel Sudarsanam, and Minnie Sudarsanam.



Kid Connection Activities — Amanda Laughlin

Little Lights Choir — Amanda Boniface, Lauren Burch, and Amanda Laughlin.

Children's Choir — Barb Larsen.

Sunday Family Picnics — Two after-church picnic lunches were held for fellowship with other families and Bethel members.

Around March 17th, the in-person COVID-19 restrictions required adjusting our ministry to continue to provide support and connection because we could not meet in person. Zoom meetings were held for **Story Times** for **3rd – 5th Grade Group**, and **Parents Fellowship**. **Care packages** of activities, goodies and notes of encouragement were sent to each Kid Connection child.

Thank you for the online **Seder Meal** put together by Robyn Winegardner and Tom Hoegel.

Advent Wreaths, Easter Cards and Take-Out Church 2020 (Flat Jesus) were sent out to each Kid Connection child. Thank you to Amanda Laughlin and Jamie Laughlin for the various special deliveries.

Unfortunately, **VBS 2020** was postponed. However, the remainder of the year's activities continued to be organized to keep everyone safe. An in-person, physically distant Kid Connection / Labor Day Retreat Event was organized on campus. Thank you to Leah Vieta, Rachel Sudarsanam, Robyn Winegardner and Jamie Laughlin for helping with this event.

Online **Sunday School** resumed in the fall. The **3rd–5th Grade Group** met for a picnic dinner and games. Thank you, Rachel Sudarsanam. In addition, they took an online Bible Class. Luke Barto, Ellie Edstrom, and Olivia Greene received their First Bibles.

Kid Connection Imagination Parade. Thank you to Patrice Sera, Bailey Sera, Rachel Sudarsanam, Robyn Winegardner, Jamie Laughlin and Jenell Laughlin who helped during this event. We continued the tradition of **Secret Angels** which the kids love.

Online **Kid Connection Christmas Program, *Happy Birthday Jesus — 2020.*** The piano was played by Amanda Boniface and sung by Claire Boniface. This recording was sent to each family and they practiced by singing along. They recorded their singing and added it to a Kid Connection Dropbox link. All those with speaking parts met by Zoom and read their parts. Thank you especially to Chris Larsen for combining the kids' recordings to create a digital recording. Tom Hoegel, Amanda Boniface, Claire Boniface, and all the parents were a huge part of making this Christmas Program possible!

6th to 8th Grade Confirmation — Robyn Winegardner & Susan Leavitt

COVID-19 has impacted **how** Confirmation gathers but it cannot stop us from gathering, from learning, from laughing, from growing, etc.

We kept meeting in spring and resumed our Zoom meetings in fall with our Old Testament study using “The Story”. Watch for your Confirmands on the fourth Sunday of each month as they continue to serve as lectors: AJ Aist, Claire Boniface, Nick Boniface, Garrett Brown, Jessica Burkhart, William Edstrom, Jack Hermann, Adam Lingscheit, Karina Lui, Lars Muller, and Jacob Riedell.



We celebrated five Confirmands Affirming their Baptism on Bethel's front lawn on June 14th, 2020: Ashish Das, Benjamin Schmitt, Devynn Deutscher, Jenell Laughlin and Noah Keish.

Susan Leavitt and Robyn Winegardner are a couple of the luckiest folks at Bethel to be able to hang out and get to know and spend time with Bethel's Confirmands.

Youth Ministry, Audio/Visual & Facilities — Tom Hoegel

2020 was an incredible year for our world, nation, state, congregation, and us as individuals. Life in COVID-19 times has pushed all of us in ways we never could have imagined. While there have been terrible losses, including the lives of many we know, we have also stayed together as a congregation. We adopted our logo and vision statement, “Doing Life Together” in 2019 and it has become more relevant than ever as we have discovered new and meaningful ways to live in community.

We are truly blessed with amazing staff and congregational leaders that have stepped it up in major ways. One of our main goals is to stay connected with each of you as well as to live out our support of the ministries around us. We raised significant funds to support Esperanza, Mt Cross and the other organizations. I believe a reason that our giving has been so strong is that we have remained faithful to doing ministry in these tough times.



I want to thank each of you for the support you have given our leadership and ask for your continued prayers as we near the fruition of our call process. While we look with great anticipation for our new full-time pastor, we are grateful for Pastor Don and his commitment to have us grapple and stretch towards being a more inclusive church.

Heading into 2021, my prayer is that our country can experience physical healing as well as moving to a place of unity. As I begin my 37th year on staff, I feel so blessed and look forward to what this year will bring.

Youth Ministry

We kicked off the year preparing for our Common Ground season putting together a program called *Focus 2020*. As we were derailed by COVID-19, we moved to online gatherings Sundays and Wednesdays on Zoom. In the summer we had a COVID-19 campout and then met weekly around a fire pit at Bethel for s'mores and conversation. Currently we meet online for Sunday School and Wednesday night fellowship. Like everyone, we are chomping at the bit to gather in person again and are looking at exploring Common Ground ideas.

Facilities Team

Our efforts have primarily been to keep our facilities and grounds cared for in a way that has us ready to open when the regulations allow. We have COVID-19 signage as well as hand sanitizer stations and will continue to let the congregation know where we are at. A big thanks goes to Dan Volk for his attention, especially on our grounds.

AV and Transportation Teams



Much like our facilities, my approach with the bus is to make sure all the systems are good, and that our certification is up to date so we can be Out 'n About again soon. We drove less than 1,000 miles last year including my periodic little runs to keep things charged and happy.

We have also spent the past several months updating our sanctuary video gear so we can live stream effectively during COVID-19 Times as well as when we begin to meet again in person. Streaming worship will be part of our approach from here on forward. I also want to give a *huge acknowledgement* to Chris Larsen for his tireless

volunteer work the past 10 months in engineering the content of our services. We are so blessed that Chris has so graciously shared of himself with us.

Worship & Music — Brian Schuette

The Worship and Music Ministry has been working hard all year to keep our Sunday services running smoothly throughout 2020. The team began meeting weekly on Zoom back in March when the Bethel campus closed to gatherings due to the pandemic. During the pandemic, Bethel has moved to a single blended, online-only Sunday service, streamed over YouTube at 10:45am. The Worship and Music team continues to meet weekly to plan the virtual services streamed on YouTube.

Each virtual service takes a huge amount of effort, and they would not be possible without the many contributions from both Bethel staff and members. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our virtual services in any way. Thank you to those leading, speaking, reading, praying, making music, taking photos, planning, writing, designing, recording, editing, and assembling. Your contributions are appreciated, and they have made it possible for us to continue worshipping together through online worship.

Children's Choir — Barb Larsen

This year began strong, with Krystal Curtiss accompanying again, and a larger group that included some middle school singers who chose to continue to participate. We were excited about adding glockenspiel and recorder to one of our anthems that would be perfect for Lent, but the COVID-19 restrictions prevented us from singing that song. I expect to try again as soon as possible.

We have kept in touch by email, and the singers received a couple of CDs and an Advent calendar, so they would know they were not forgotten.

This past Christmas season several of the choir members provided music for worship services. Two sang solos, and others participated in family selections or prominent parts of the Sunday School Christmas Program.

Now that I know there are choir members who are able/interested in singing solos, I plan to find more opportunities for them to provide selections for upcoming worship services. I am also exploring options to do an anthem remotely.

All-Bethel Choir — Mike Halloran



This last year, the Bethel Choir, like other ministries went online due to the pandemic. With the encouragement of the choir and support staff at Bethel, we have an active way to aid Worship and spread the Good News using Zoom to hold and record rehearsals. The 17 members recorded individual vocal tracks and sent them to me where they were edited and combined to create the online videos for the service. The choir reached out to other music organizations at Bethel and in the community to share resources and information. We collaborated with Bethel's Bell Choir, the San Jose Chamber Orchestra, Immanuel, Los Altos and Prince of Peace, Saratoga. Indeed, we are still making it up as we go along but are blessed to lift our voices and quoting Psalm 100: *Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord*. Although we hope and pray for the return to in-person worship, the Choir looks forward to the challenges of 2021.

Support Preachers — Joan Christensen

Thank you very much for Supply Pastors and Bethel Members that preached during our online services: Rev. Anne Carlson, Chris Christensen, Dave Denny, Adam Erickson, Tyler Freckman, Rev. Liz Milner, Randy Shattuck and Rachel Sudarsanam.

Offering Counters — Liz Tribby

A special thanks goes out to Betty Dombrowsky who retired this year as a counter after 35 years of service.

Mission Outreach — Mark Evashenk

Apart from making and serving breakfast at the San Jose Family Shelter, all Mission Outreach activities continued although in a modified fashion. We were able to support Sacred Heart Community Services, West Valley Community Services, Lord's Pantry and Help One Child.

The Bethel congregation showed its love and generosity throughout the year. Collection was different but done via drop off at Bethel, direct shipment to the Evashenk home, or drop off at the Evashenk home.

A financial contribution to San Jose Family Shelter was made in lieu of volunteers preparing and serving.

Mt Cross Ministries — Holly Lofgren, Mt. Cross Liaison

Mt Cross camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains faced two serious challenges in 2020: fire and a global pandemic.

Starting in March, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Mt Cross had to close most of its programming. All group rental programs and the summer camp program were canceled. The camp maintained a skeleton family camp program. Although a small offering, this program helped patrons of the camp still be able to visit and stay, albeit very socially distanced.



The PPP grants helped pay staff for a while, but by summer the camp had to furlough all its staff except one employee, the Executive Director.

The second major challenge was the complex of fires in the region that came within a mile of the camp. Mt Cross needed to evacuate. Fortunately, the fire did not reach its borders and there was almost no damage. However, the evacuation did cause a pause in family camp reservations and the ED said Mt Cross grounds all smelled like a campfire for weeks. The local community shared their concern and thankfulness that Mt Cross camp was spared from the fires.

The ministry responded by holding monthly camp clean up and brush and tree *defensible space* workdays when volunteers removed debris and dead trees.

To combat the loss in income, the camp appealed for donations. It takes about \$25,000 per month to pay the bills. Through the Grace of God, two donors gave matching gifts that brought in over \$100,000 in late 2020. Mt Cross is likely to continue to need this type of support throughout 2021, but it is our belief that this wonderful place of faith, in a majestic redwood forest, will carry on for many more decades to come.

CIC Ministries (Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy) — Chris Christensen

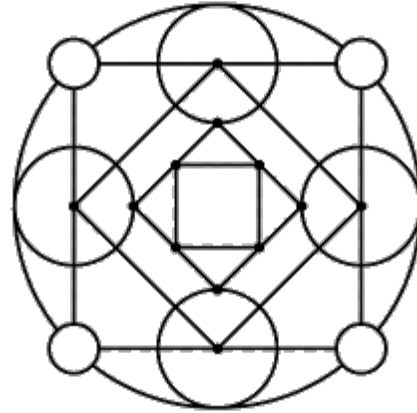
It has been a difficult year for CIC as we have had to reinvent how to do ministry in the jails. Most volunteer visits were put on hold from March until they started to ease some later in the year with entirely different rules. The jails and juvenile hall have been hit by COVID-19 as have many if not most correctional institutions. This has put somewhat of a strain on the chaplains as did the unrest following the death of George Floyd. We have been fortunate to have continued support for the ministry from our volunteers and donors. The contract for juvenile hall comes up in June so that always causes a bit of stress.

Just a little peek into what this year has been like can be seen in the communion incident. CIC normally distributes communion at Christmas time. In-person distribution was off the table, but we received the unusual permission to deliver prepackaged plastic communion kits which have a bit of grape juice and a wafer. Shortly before Christmas our Director Rev. Liz Milner, who has spoken at Bethel a couple times in the last year, noticed that her garage floor was not just covered with kits but with wine. The kits had fermented and exploded all over her garage. The supplier quickly shipped replacement kits, but these were too sturdy

to use in a prison (glass cups as I recall). With Christmas Eve fast approaching, at the last moment we were able to get a 3rd usable shipment. It has been that kind of year.

Quilters — Joann Weberg

2020 delivered several obstacles for us to overcome. This year we took on the Key Leadership role for Lutheran World Relief's (LWR) annual Ingathering for Northern California. Our quilting group helped 19 churches in our Synod with the delivery of their boxes of Quilts, Fabric Kits, Baby Kits, Personal care kits and School Bag Kits. We stored 338 boxes in Torvend Hall until a truck came on Jan. 8th to ship them to the LWR St. Paul warehouse. This year Bethel Quilters donated 130 School kits (10 boxes) and 81 Quilts (9 boxes). Through 2020 our Quilters have donated 913 Quilts, 176 School kits and 180 Personal Care kits.



Although the number of quilts we made in 2020 diminished, we did not stop despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Several of our members were able to work at home with design work, sewing and tying the quilts. We wish to thank the congregation in helping with this mission by purchasing some quilts, which helped offset our expenses. We shall continue to hang some quilts in the Fireside room and on the Sanctuary pews, which people may purchase.

Education & Discipleship — Kathy Arnold

The ministries evolved to meet the COVID-19 restrictions.



First Wednesday Speaker Series — Kathy Arnold, Patricia Myerholtz, Pastor Don Larson

There were only two:

- January 2020 - *Newly Signed and Proposed Laws that Affect Homeowners and Renters in Sunnyvale and Cupertino* by Holly Lofgren
- February 2020 - *Civil Discourse: Bridging the Many Divisions in Our Society* by Bob Barrett and Tony Stieber.

Sunday Adult Education Classes — Kathy Arnold, Pastor Don Larson

The classes continued Sundays until the COVID-19 restrictions took effect. In person, we watched “The Overcomers” by Dr. David Jeremiah then part of “Guardrails” by Andy Stanley. They resumed on Wednesdays via Zoom, first with “Hangouts with Pastor Don” followed by “Chasing David” by Rene Schlaepfer. Rolanda Pierre Dixon, a retired Santa Clara Assistant Director, shared her view of what it means to be white or Black. The series that followed was a portion of “Colors of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism” by Jemar Tisby. To finish off the year we returned to complete “Guardrails” by Andy Stanley. Depending on the discussion topic, the attendance ranged from 9 to 36.

Women of Wednesday — Kathryn Montano

The group met via Zoom. The current study book is “Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Be an Everyday Missionary” by Greg Finke. The average attendance is 12.

Readers Anonymous — Joan Hill

We met until the COVID-19 restrictions took effect. After a hiatus, we began meeting via Zoom and have not stopped since. The books include “The Bluest Eye” by Toni Morrison, “Next Year in Havana” by Chantal Cleeton, “After You” by JoJo Moyes, “When We Left Cuba” by Chantal Cleeton, “A Woman of No Importance” by Sonia Pernell, “The Hideaway” by Karen Denton, “Blessings” by Anna Quindlen and “The Prodigal God” by Timothy Keller. The average attendance was 6. Thank you to Elayne Rehn for motivating us to use Zoom.

Men's Night Out — David Nadell

Our group met via Zoom to stay connected and study the “Johannine Epistles”. The average attendance was 4.

Congregational Life — Patricia Myerholtz and Sue Jacobus

We began the year with our annual **Chili Cook Off** and then just started looking forward to hosting the annual egg hunt when COVID-19 hit. We were devastated but with determination we gathered ourselves and continued with an online **Art Fair**. It was a fun well attended event and we found out it was a great way to have our Bethel family share all their amazing talent!

Through Zoom we were able to come together with all the ministry leaders and host the **Ministry Gathering**. *You hold the key to keeping the doors of Bethel open.* Our ministry leaders enjoyed sharing the many creative ways their ministries continued to accomplish their activities and stay connected — it was inspiring for us all! **Supper Club** continued to meet under the guidance of Janice Martinson. Out 'n About had some wonderful adventures hosting Octoberfest on Zoom and with live reservations as well — a great event! **Pumpkin Decorating Kits** were distributed to our Evergreens group and it was fun delivering them. Advent Kits were distributed. Many members participated by decorating stars that shone on our “Garland of Hope” all through Advent and Christmas!

As the COVID-19 situation continues, we are determined to continue to bring together events to our Bethel family for all.

Supper Clubs — Janice Martinson

Supper Clubs — they barely got off the ground in 2020 and I did not provide support after COVID-19 reared its ugly head.

Four Supper Clubs with 30 people were formed in February 2020. Some groups were able to meet at least once during 2020 before COVID-19 hit. Some groups continued to meet over Zoom after COVID-19 hit. When we can meet in person again, a volunteer will be needed to coordinate Supper Clubs.

Here is all you need to do:

- advertise Supper Clubs two to three times a year
- collect sign-ups for Supper Clubs two or three times a year
- identify initial hostesses/hosts for the first meeting (there have been two to four groups per session so you would need two to four hostesses/hosts each session)
- form groups (6-8 people)
- communicate to initial hostesses/hosts
- communicate to the Supper Club participants

Time commitment is not huge — a couple of hours two or three times a year. Skills required: servant's heart, communication, and organization.

Out 'n About — The Active Fellowship Ministry — Tom Hoegel

Here is what we did with Out 'n About:

- January: Cantor Arts Center on the Stanford Campus
- February: Cracker Barrel and Old Town Sacramento / Train Museum
- March: Zoom Beer Meeting
- October: Ludwig's German Table (In-person and Zoom)

I also started the Bethel Motorcycle Club. We have about 8 members and went on 6 rides last year.

Thank you to the following Out 'n About team members: Tom Hoegel, Marianne Nadell, Molly Schrey, Patricia Myerholtz, Paul Baldwin, Jules Kurtz, Dave Lofgren, Adam Klopfenstein and Ellen Aist.

Labor Day Retreat 2020 — Molly Schrey

“20/20 Vision and Perspective” was the theme for this year's retreat. Not a pandemic nor wildfires could keep us from this annual Bethel tradition! This two-day retreat continued virtually with Bethel members taking the lead on the workshops, worship, and activities.

Saturday started with a Zoom coffeecake baking and morning social followed by chair Yoga. Bethel's Kid Connection and Confirmands gathered at Bethel to share in art projects and some much-needed interaction (socially distanced, of course!).

The day continued with several workshops that Bethel members and friends could pick and choose as they wished. These included: A Devotional: Okay/Stop!, Stress and Self-Care Workshop, Navigating School During the Pandemic, Building Your Own Travel Bucket List, and a Jigsaw and Wine Social. In the evening we re-shared Bethel's Talent Night and wrapped up day one with the traditional Campfire Song and Story Time with Katlynn Hoegel and Tyler Freckmann.

The Polar Bear Swim participants had to get creative for this virtual morning dunk — the event involved hoses, buckets of water, and even one hot tub!

While worship could not be held at beautiful Mt. Cross due to the fires, the retreat worship team live-streamed worship from Bethel's front lawn with Tyler Freckmann delivering the sermon. Tyler and others shared the perspective they gained during this strange and challenging year.

Many thanks to all on the Retreat Committee for their hard work and to Bethel members for continuing the spirit of this beloved annual event! Including the service, there were approximately 100 attendees.

Care Ministries — Joanne Stensaas



Caring Connection stepped up right away when COVID-19 hit this year. We all met as soon as we could via Zoom and with the help of Tony Stieber and Robyn Winegardner leading us, we were all able to get a list together of those that may need some extra connection and help. We have continued to meet via Zoom monthly and continue to find ways to help those that may need a call or even technology help. With the guidance of Robyn Winegardner, we were excited to start up the sending of birthday cards and all occasion cards. Thank you to Robyn Winegardner and Leslie Steen for the making of the beautiful cards.

Prayer Bytes — Robyn Winegardner

Prayer Bytes at Bethel give folks a chance to join 66 others who choose to receive an email each morning with some of the prayer requests of the Bethel community. It is about 5 or 6 prayers a day and includes members, former members, friends, and concerns of God's worldwide creation. Anyone can subscribe, or unsubscribe, at any time. Just contact Patricia Myerholtz, Liz Tribby, or Robyn Winegardner and you will be all set. Also, if you have a Prayer Request for the Bethel newsletter, contact Patricia Myerholtz or Robyn Winegardner to get your request known to Bethel's *Prayer Warriors*.

Finance and Human Resources — Fara Brock

The church office closed in mid-March when the first stay-at-home order was issued. Fortunately, we were able to keep the entire Bethel staff employed with no interruptions to the financial management of the church. We applied for and were granted a Payroll Protection Program loan from the Small Business Administration and we have applied for loan forgiveness. As a result of business interruption due to the stay-at-home order, we have worked closely with our tenant and the Executive Committee on rent relief in the form of rent forgiveness and rent deferral.

Thanks to the strong support of the congregation during this difficult year, we finished December 7% ahead of forecast in general fund giving, year to date for fiscal year 2021. The church continued to address the needs of our community during this pandemic by donating to support many local and international relief agencies with \$73,000 in outreach and benevolence dollars. Top recipients of Bethel's giving include Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, Esperanza, Mt. Cross, West Valley Community Services, Habitat for Humanity, Second Harvest Food Bank, and the Synod for churchwide mission support. Bethel also continued to support New Life Band and Operation Bootstrap for the MaaSAE Girls school in Tanzania with extra donations for COVID-19 relief.

I am grateful for the team of volunteers who continued to work to keep Bethel running smoothly even though the office was closed for a pandemic:

- Liz Tribby for managing membership records and keeping the office IT updated and reliable.
- Dave Larsen for overseeing the integrity of Bethel's budget and financial reporting.
- Finance Committee members Dave Tribby, Jack Wedgwood, Jamie Laughlin, Joan Christensen, Brett Deutscher and Ann Marie Kenitzer for guidance during this difficult year
- Mark Evashenk for leadership on benevolence and outreach giving.
- Holly Lofgren for conducting the annual inventory and updating Bethel's assets.
- Brad Martinson for managing Bethel computers, internet, and telephone infrastructure.
- Brian Schuette for upgrading and optimizing Bethel's wireless network.

I am very proud and blessed to be a part of this compassionate faith community.

Finance & Stewardship — Scott Anderson & Brett Deutscher

The Stewardship committee comprised Scott Anderson, Brett Deutscher & Lisa Onishi.

We focused our messages to the congregation in June, with several Zoomercials, and stewardship-related messages prior to virtual Faith Promise card collection. Bethel responded with the majority of Faith Promises collected via the new virtual webform, as well as some traditional mail-in Faith Promises.

We applaud our congregation as we continued to live out our core value of generosity during this very different year of online worship and distanced fellowship.

Planning for our Stewardship campaign started in April, and Faith Promise card follow up with members continued into July, with a final report generated in August. The report showed another solid year of Faith Promises, as nearly 100 Faith Promises were received.

We are very grateful for the consistent level of giving by our Bethel family during this difficult period of isolation due to Covid-19. This mature level of generosity helps guide Bethel leadership toward responsible budget decisions each year.



Thank you for the generous giving of your resources, and your continued investment in Bethel and its ministries. We look forward to seeing you all again during 2021.

Nominating Committee — Hella Bluhm-Stieber

The Nominating Committee worked with Council President and Pastor to recruit qualified candidates for open council positions and to advise ministries to fill their open positions. I worked with the Council President and President-elect to see which council positions might be opening or needed to be reaffirmed for another term. We had several phone and e-mail exchanges to talk about open positions and possible candidates. Members of the Nominating committee recruited a candidate for the Audit committee, and two candidates for the Nominating committee. Members of the Nominating committee are currently working on recruitment of a candidate for President-elect and for the Stewardship committee. The other members of the committee are Doreen Baldwin and Jack Wedgwood.

Technology & Administration

Technology Support — Liz Tribby

There was less to do in 2020 to keep the office computers running since so few of them were in use much after March. But in August our intrepid but aging server (installed in March 2009) failed to boot after a power outage. We had been anticipating its demise for a few years, so contingency plans were in place. We moved the files we needed to one of the other office computers that had plenty of hard drive space and set up file sharing, so everyone has access to them. All the other functions of the server had been taken over several years ago by other updated network components.

Web Ministry — Dave Arnold



We maintain the web site for Bethel Lutheran Church at <https://www.bethelcupertino.org/>. This provides a comprehensive and current view of the activities at Bethel for visitors and members alike. It is Bethel's virtual front door to the community. The most popular pages are the home page, the church calendar, and the sermons page.

User views of Bethel's YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/BethelCupertino>, increased significantly since COVID-19 restrictions began in March,

from 60 to 300 per week.

In March, we redesigned the sermon page to be mobile-friendly, upgraded the MP3 files to 192 kbps, and submitted the podcast to iTunes to increase its visibility.

Over 100 new events were submitted to the Bethel calendar in 2020.

In November, Bethel's hosting service, Bluehost, obsoleted the PHP package that we originally used for access to our MySQL database. This was to increase security. We prepared for this by reviewing and rewriting the code for our website to use a newer API.

We published minutes and details of the upcoming constitution changes in preparation for our Congregational Meetings.

At the request of the Finance Committee, monthly Financial Reports are no longer published.

In 2020, we updated the web site over 200 times. This included an Application Form and a Congregation Survey for the Call Committee, a new Pledge Form for the Stewardship Committee and a Schedule and Packing List for the Labor Day Retreat.

Google Analytics reports 40 page views per day to our home page. 30% of these are from mobile and tablet devices. Google Search reports 200 impressions and 10 clicks per day.

*2021 Thank you to Kathy Arnold, Elise Holst, Patricia Myerholtz, Liz Tribby, Dave Arnold
and all Ministry Leads who contributed to our Congregational report.*

annual report for 2020 v4.docx