

PASTOR'S PAGE

Jesus said "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

With these words, Jesus established the church on earth. Just 10 days later, the Apostles did just as Jesus said, teaching the people gathered on Pentecost to repent and be baptized. On that day, 3000 men were added to the Church. Since that day, the Church has continued to teach and baptize all over the world, and many, many people have been added to it and will continue to be added to it until Christ comes to bring the Church home.

So, we know what we are to be doing in our lives as "little churches" of the One Holy Church: Teach and baptize, baptize and teach, bring people to the font of Baptism, and keep them there for their entire lives through the renewal of baptism that is Confession and Absolution, feeding them with the Body and Blood of Jesus, which grants salvation and life.

The question arises: "How do we actually get people to come and hear and be baptized?" The Lord used the feast of Pentecost, where He commanded that the Jews gather together. It was to these Jews that Peter preached and who were converted by the Holy Spirit. We don't celebrate Pentecost anymore, and we don't live in Jerusalem either. So, waiting for the new gathering of thousands of people seeking God will probably not happen.

We understand the commandment is that we do something, but what does that really look like? We all want to see new people coming and joining, but how does that happen? Whose responsibility is it to evangelize? What words do we need to use? What is the program that will really get people to come? Maybe you have even been afraid your little outpost in God's Church would close if somebody doesn't start doing something about the lack of people and you really want answers to what is going on. (or not going on.)

It is here that I apologize because I am not giving a short and sweet answer to the problem. After all, there are no short and sweet answers. This topic is really hard to understand. So, we are starting a new evening Bible Study to bring us together to answer these questions from God's Word. We will discuss all the issues of outreach, or evangelism together. And we will come away with a greater understanding of God's work in our lives.

We will use a book as our starting off point. I say book, but it's really short. There will be copies of it available to pick up in the church office. Just ask Gina. The title is "Be at Leisure, A Lutheran Approach to Outreach" by Pastor Andrew Richard.

Our first meeting will be at Immanuel on Tuesday, January 7th at 6 pm. Our first time for Bethany will be Tuesday, Jan 14th, at 6 pm. I will be at Immanuel the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays and at Bethany on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays. Expect the class to last 45 minutes. There will be light refreshments served.

This class is open to ANYone who wants to learn more. It will NOT be a training class for how to knock on doors, give out flyers on the street corner, or get your waitress to repent and come to church. So don't fear that the goal is to send you out to transform the neighborhood for Christ. The title of the book is "Be at Leisure" after all. What we will do is be built up in faith and love and brotherly affection and real hope that comes from God.

In Christ,
Pastor Johnson

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1-8: Audrey Nikisch
1-10: John Willadsen
1-11: Kandice Brooks
Kelly Paltzer
1-16: Brianna Meyer

1-21: Brian Welsh
1-24: Mary Madden
1-26: Alicia Barthels
1-29: Zakary Willadsen



January Anniversaries

1-24: Tim & Megan Fibiger

Blessings to all that are celebrating this month!

If we missed a member's birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office, and let us know.



When Pastor Johnson was asked, "what can the members of Bethany do during this time of vacancy and transition" he said, "one of the most important things you can do right now is gather together in God's Word." So, he has decided to offer an additional Bible Study every other Tuesday evening (2nd and 4th Tuesdays) at 6:00pm that will focus on Outreach. You can read more about the study in Pastor Johnson's article in this newsletter. Please consider joining us! Light refreshments will be available.

The Tuesday morning study on Isaiah will also continue at 10:30am every Tuesday.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Christmas greetings and the Lord's blessings to you all! I hope everyone enjoyed celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, with family and friends. It was great to see so many people in church on Christmas Eve! I'd like to thank the altar guild and their spouses for helping make the church look so festive for advent and Christmas every year. It always looks so beautiful and welcoming, which I'm sure leaves a memorable impression on our visitors who attend the Christmas services. Keep inviting your families and friends, it would be great to see these attendance numbers continue.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to all who attended the voter's meeting earlier this month, where we chose the new pastor who we would extend the call to. We had a great turnout for this meeting, and it was great to see how much you all care about the future of our church! As most of you know by now, we chose Pastor James Daub from Havelock, NC. He has 25 years of experience in the ministry and was one of the top-rated ministers on our call list. We have since completed the call paperwork and extended the call to him. Please keep him and his wife, Megan, in your prayers that they may answer our call. They will be coming to visit on January 2nd and 3rd. We will be arranging a meet and greet, so he can meet our church family and leadership team. Stay tuned for further details!

As we look forward to 2025, it will be a time of uncertainty and change, as we seek a new pastor, but I'm confident our loving Lord will lead the right person to this calling. Please continue to pray for our church and congregation. We all need to do our part, as well, to help our church continue to thrive and grow. Get involved and volunteer. Invite family, friends, and neighbors to our services. Take the opportunity to reach out to members who may have not attended in a while. Attend one of Pastor Johnson's Bible studies! It all matters!

I hope you all have safe travels and a memorable near year, as you celebrate with family and friends.

Yours in Christ,

Andy Fibiger

2025 BOARD MEMBERS

President: Andy Fibiger

Vice President: Todd Matte

Council Secretary: Julie Steele

Board of Elders: Shua Yang, Gerry Luebke, Lee Gumm, Steve Hazen

Board of Trustees: Dan Fibiger, David Hasler

Board of Finance: Bob Wuerzberger, David Meyer

Board of Education: Dori Matte, Gina Fibiger, Megan Fibiger

Financial Secretary: Mary Ann Fibiger

Treasurer: Tim Fibiger



Thank you to all who serve Bethany!

JANUARY/FEBRUARY CHARITY OF THE MONTH – Orphan Grain Train

During the months of January and February, all money collected from your “Designated Offerings” contribution envelopes will go **Orphan Grain Train**. Orphan Grain Train is a Christian volunteer network that shares personal and material resources with needy people in America and around the world. Grain Train volunteers gather donations of clothing, medical supplies, food, Christian literature, and other aid to meet real needs. For more information, visit their website at www.oqt.org

CHARITIES OF THE MONTH FOR 2025

January/February – Orphan Grain Train

March/April – Lutheran Bible Translators

May/June - Vernacular Video Mission International (VMI)

July/August – Lutheran Deaf Mission Society

September/October - Good News Jail and Prison Ministry

November/December - Lutheran World Relief

CHARITY
OF THE
MONTH

To give to these charities, you can use your “Designated Offering” contribution envelopes.
Thank you for supporting these missions.



CHURCH CANCELLATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the case of bad weather this winter, please check TODAY’S TMJ4 TV station for church cancellations. You can also go online to tmj4.com or 620WTMJ on the radio. Any cancellations will also be announced on Facebook as well as our church website www.bethanylutherankohler.org

FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2025 flower calendar is up on the bulletin board in the lower narthex. If you’d like to purchase a flower arrangement in celebration of an event or in memory or in honor of a loved one, sign up on the date you’d like, and Gina will contact you when the date approaches. The cost of an arrangement is \$30, and you can take your flowers home with you to enjoy after the Sunday church service.



THOSE SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2025

Sunday, January 5

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion

Elder:	Gerry Luebke
Ushers:	Dave & Sue Prange
Altar Guild:	Gina & Andy Fibiger
Scripture Reader:	Steve Hazen
Door Locker:	Andy Fibiger
Streaming:	Andy Fibiger

Sunday, January 12

10:00 a.m.

Elder:	Lee Gumm
Ushers:	Jerry Sabrowsky, Dan Fibiger
Altar Guild:	Barb & Karl Kaeppler
Scripture Reader:	Mary Ann Fibiger
Door Locker:	Dan Fibiger
Streaming:	Madison Fibiger

Sunday, January 19

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion


Elder:	Shua Yang
Ushers:	Fibigers
Altar Guild:	Shirley & Ray Ottman
Scripture Reader:	Lee Gumm
Door Locker:	Diane Marotz
Streaming:	Andy Fibiger

Sunday, January 26

10:00 a.m.

Elder:	Steve Hazen
Ushers:	Ray & Shirley Ottman
Altar Guild:	Sue & Dave Prange
Scripture Reader:	Todd Matte
Door Locker:	Ken Thompson
Streaming:	Brianna Meyer

JANUARY 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			01	02 7:15pm Dartball (away)	03	04
05 8:45am Sunday School 10am Worship w/HC (Pastor Krause)	06	07 10:30 am Bible Study	08	09 7:15pm Dartball (home)	10	11
12 8:45am Sunday School 10am Worship (Pastor Johnson)	13	14 10:30 am Bible Study 6pm Bible Study 6:15pm Finance 7pm Council	15	16	17	18
19 8:45am Sunday School 10am Worship w/HC (Pastor King)	20	21 10:30 am Bible Study	22	23 7:15pm Dartball (home)	24	25
26 8:45am Sunday School 10am Worship (Pastor King)	27	28 10:30 am Bible Study 6pm Bible Study	29	30 7:15pm Dartball (home)	31	