

PASTOR'S PAGE

"You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you that you may go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15:6

This month of Bethany will gather again as children of God to seek His will for you, as you will call a pastor to come and serve you. This will be the fourth time you have done this, which means you are becoming experts at the process, albeit begrudgingly.

I know I have learned a lot about the call process in our Synod. Before this, I had never been on the "other" side of a Divine Call. Now I know more about the struggles, hopes, and disappointments that come with this time. As your vacancy pastor, I have heard your stories and listened to what you would hope would happen, and I have also been here to listen to your frustrations. Thank you for letting me into that conversation. You will help me when I am faced with helping guide a congregation to find their next pastor. I pray that you have been blessed to see the larger working of our Synod, as many pastors have come to serve you in your time of need.

Some of the things I have learned in this process are eye-opening. I learned just this past Monday at our Circuit Visitor meeting that the average vacancy time for a congregation now stands at 18 months. I learned the biggest struggle for most congregations in finding a new pastor is affording the salary and benefits as they keep going up. I learned that vacancy really starts when the pastor first says he is really thinking about retirement. Which means you have been in vacancy for a lot longer than 1 year.

Through this process, what I have learned most of all is to trust that the work of the church will continue unabated. It may look different from week to week, but it won't stop. The Word of God has continued to be taught and preached. People have had their sins forgiven, and the Lord's Supper, where heaven and earth collide as Jesus comes to us, has been celebrated regularly. Why have those things continued? That is just what the church is and does. Those are the things that make us children of God. Those are the things that give us the firm foundation of the solid rock of Christ in our lives. These are the gifts God gives to those He has chosen.

The verse I've chosen to share with you is Jesus speaking directly to you. You don't choose him, He chooses you. He knows you. He is with you. And the fruit that you are to bear is the faith that you are given abundantly by His work in Word and Sacrament. It is these that let us rest in Him at the end of the day.

I still don't know what the future holds. I don't know if this will be the last call or still one of many more to come. I don't know what will become of any of our churches in our Synod. But I know that we all have Jesus, which binds us together in a sure and certain hope for our future, both in this life and the eternal one. I also know that as you look to Jesus, He will bless you and you will bear abundant fruit of faith for yourselves and for many people around you. And I pray that when the time comes when a neighboring congregation is in need, you will reach out to help them. That you will give of your time and energy and experience with the things God has given you.

Rev. Don Johnson

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

“A Longer Look at the Lessons” - Led by Pastor Johnson

Delve deeper into the upcoming Sunday’s three Scripture readings with *A Longer Look at the Lessons*. This Bible study based on the lectionary in *Lutheran Service Book* provides information about the readings and their contexts. A look at Greek or Hebrew words or phrases is sometimes included. Questions and answers mine the riches of the pericopes while encouraging class discussion and personal application.



At Bethany Tuesday mornings at 10:30 am starting September 9

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this message, the call committee just finished interviewing three pastors this week. Two of them will be added to the ballot to vote on at our next voter’s meeting, which we plan to hold on September 21 after the service. We are working on setting up an interview with one more, hopefully next week, so we can provide three to choose from. Please continue to pray that the Lord leads us to the pastor whom he has chosen for us. I’d like to personally thank everyone on the call committee for their continued commitment and hard work that they’ve put in to trying to find a pastor. I realize that reviewing all this paperwork, watching videos, and attending many long meetings can be trying at times. Just know your efforts do not go unnoticed! I ask the congregation to pray for the committee as well, that the Lord gives them continued strength, focus, and determination to carry on with this endeavor.

As we prepare to receive a new pastor, the parsonage has now been vacated so we can begin renovating the home with some much-needed updates. Dan Fibiger and I did a walk-through with the previous tenant last week to see what all needed to be updated as well as received a list from them of what is in immediate need of attention and what would be some “nice to haves” in the future. I’d like to thank the Roeske family for being such wonderful tenants over the years and for taking such great care of our parsonage while they lived there. It was left as clean as, if not cleaner than, the day they moved in, which I really appreciate. I sincerely wish them the best as they begin the next chapter of their lives at a new home and hope we see them visit us again in the future! Stay tuned for more information on the parsonage, as we will likely need some volunteers to assist with design work, coordinating the renovations, and maybe even helping with some of the renovations.

Last, but not least, we are bringing back the church picnic this year, after taking a short hiatus. It will be held after the service on September 7th. I encourage you all to attend and enjoy some good food, fun, and fellowship!

Yours in Christ,
Andy Fibiger

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9-05: Kathryn Miller
Sue Sholten
9-07: Doug Luecke
9-11: Steve Hazen
9-13: Marc Luecke
9-14: Lisa Kraus
9-16: Bob Wuerzberger



9-17: Gerry Luebke
9-20: Dane Madson
9-23: Andy Fibiger
Lee Gumm
9-26: Shelby Werner
Tamra O'Keefe
9-27: Gary Froh

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

9-14: John & Lisa Willadsen
9-15: Dan & Summer Menzer
9-19: Bruce & Cindy Fisher
9-21: Gerry & Lynn Luebke
9-30: Shua & KaoKalia Yang



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.

SEPTEMBER ADOPT-A-BAG FOOD DRIVE

Shopping bags will be available soon in the lower narthex for you to take and fill with food for the Sheboygan Falls Area Food Pantry. Bring your filled bag back to church any time during the month of September. The Food Pantry serves Sheboygan Falls, Kohler, Howards Grove and Oostburg. Thank you for your support!



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER MISSION OF THE MONTH **Good News Jail & Prison Ministry**

During the months of September and October, any money received in your "Designated Offering" contribution envelope, will go to **Good News Jail and Prison Ministry** – Transforming lives behind bars here and around the world. By bringing the Holy Gospel to inmates, they are reaching those others may have forgotten. To learn more about Good News, visit their website at www.goodnewsjail.org

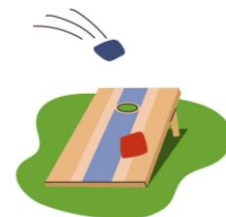
SPECIAL VOTER'S MEETING **Sunday, September 21, 2024**



The voters' meeting will be held immediately after the service on Sunday, September 21. At this meeting, the Call Committee will be presenting three candidates for Pastor and the congregation will vote on which one to place a call to. We will also be discussing a proposal for new air conditioning units at this meeting. Please plan to attend!

CHURCH PICNIC

- Date:** Sunday, September 7, 2025
- Time:** 11:00am – following the church service
- Location:** Lunch in the fellowship hall, fellowship and games outside
- Who:** Everyone! Please bring a friend, neighbor, grandchild, cousin...the more the merrier!
- Details:** We will be having a good old-fashioned potluck. The church will provide the meat and drinks and those who are able, can sign up to bring a side dish (potato, pasta salad, fruit, veggie, chips, snacks, and of course DESSERT!). After lunch, we will head outside for some fellowship and yard games for all ages (fellowship and games will be inside if it rains).
- RSVP:** Signup sheets are posted in the lower narthex for attendance, donations, and volunteer opportunities. You can also call (920.457.4681) or email (info@blckohler.com) the church office.



LWML MITES - LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION



Don't forget to keep filling those Mite Boxes and bring them back to church on the **1st Sunday of every month** when the large Mite Box will be out to collect your donations. These Mites will be sent to LWML to support mission grants like "Fortifying Faith in Those with Vision Impairment" – Lutheran Braille Workers, "Equipping Youth Leaders" – LCMS Youth Ministry, "Tanzania Children's Homes" – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, Africa. ***Thank you for your support of the LWML Mite Box program!***



Love INC is seeking five Financial Advocates for our NEW Financial Habits class!

Financial Habits is a course that explores the financial habits of personal budgeting, goal setting, saving for emergencies and goals, along with opportunities to grow your relationship with God.

- Build key habits: **budgeting, goal setting, saving, emergency planning, and prayer**
- Get help creating your own **Spending Plan**
- **One-on-one support** each week to answer your questions
- Ideal for anyone ready **to take control of their finances and grow spiritually**

As a Financial Advocate, you'll support someone in applying what they learn in class to their personal financial journey. You'll attend weekly sessions, then meet one-on-one to help connect the content to real-life goals. No training needed — just a basic understanding of budgeting!

Turn Conversations into Change — Become a Financial Advocate!

12-Week Class Sept. 4 – Nov. 20 (Thursday nights 5-7 pm)

Contact Dawn Grabowski: 920-786-6701 x5104 or dawn@loveincsheboygancounty.org



STEVE MAROTZ and LEE GUMM – VIETNAM VETERANS



Thank you so very much!

The "Old Glory Honor Flight #75", to Washington D.C., took off from the EAA on Friday, July 25. Among 94 Vietnam veterans were Steve Marotz and Lee Gumm. Their "Guardians" were sons Ben and Tim, respectively. This started November 30, 2023 when paperwork was sent in. It takes that long once you apply to actually get the call. Steve graduated from Sheboygan Falls High School in 1967 and joined the Army August 21, 1969. His Basic Training took place at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He then went to Fort Hood Texas, where he worked for the Inspector General. He served in Vietnam from September 1970 to September 1971 as an Administrative Specialist. He finished his time in the Army at the Army Recruiting Command, Minneapolis as a budget officer. He was discharged on February 24, 1972.

Lee Graduated from Kohler High School in 1966. He joined the U.S. Army about 6 months after graduation at age 18. His Basic Training was at Fort Ord, California. He then got his Photo-Lab training at the 69th Signal Battalion, Fort Monmouth New Jersey. He left for Vietnam on June 2, 1967. He served in the 221st Signal Company, Tan San Nhut for nine months, then moved to Cam Rahn Bay, working in "air-conditioned" photo-labs. He departed from there on July 2, 1968. Lee finished his time in the Army at Fort Rucker Alabama, where he managed the office of the 53rd Aviation Battalion Headquarters. His discharge took place on August 29, 1969.



← Tim & Lee; Steve & Ben

This Honor Flight took those 94 Viet Nam veterans to Washington D.C. for the purpose of letting them see the Vietnam “wall” and related monuments. We also went to the Museum of American History. It was there that we were directed to the areas explaining the evolution of the American Flag and the National Anthem. We also saw the vast area dedicated to memorabilia and actual equipment used in the Vietnam war. The day passed quickly, it was about 99 degrees, so lots of water was consumed. Because of our late start (2 hour flight delay out of Oshkosh), we had to scratch Arlington Cemetery from itinerary. On our return flight we had “Mail Call”. If it was not already emotional by that point, it certainly was as we read all the cards and letters we received. There were tears. We returned to the EAA at 7:30pm. Estimates of 40 thousand people greeted us upon our return. We were so honored to have our sons Ben and Tim, serving as our guardians (a requirement on these flights). We will all remember that time for eternity. After we landed, all guardians had to get off of the plane. Next the Vets came off, it was “Their Time” now, and it was unbelievable coming down the steps and seeing all the people, then walking at least 300’ flanked on both sides by all active duty personnel. They saluted and offered handshakes. After all that, the best came, seeing our family members and an “ocean” of others who wanted to experience this moment.

So thank you to ALL of you who participated in the “Mail Call” and to those who took the time to write notes, phone call, text, give personal face-to-face thanks and e-mail us before and after the event. There were still cards coming in the mailbox too! We have truly been blessed to have had this experience, but the best blessings are our families, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbors and Bethany members. Please know you are loved and a very important part of **US**.

Yours Truly,

Steve Marotz and Lee Gumm

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

Sunday, September 7

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion

Elder:

Shua Yang

Ushers:

Ken Thompson, Bob Kuehlman

Altar Guild:

Gina & Andy Fibiger

Scripture Reader:

Lee Gumm

Door Locker:

Andy Fibiger

Streaming:

Todd Matte

Sunday, September 14

10:00 a.m.

Elder:

Lee Gumm

Ushers:

Steve & Diane Marotz

Altar Guild:

Barb & Lee Gumm

Scripture Reader:

Mary Ann Fibiger

Door Locker:

Dan Fibiger

Streaming:

Madison Fibiger

Sunday, September 21

10:00 a.m.

w/Holy Communion

Elder:

Steve Hazen

Ushers:

Todd & Dori Matte

Altar Guild:

Liz & Ken Buesing

Scripture Reader:

Sharon Werner

Door Locker:

Diane Marotz

Streaming:

Steve Perry

Sunday, September 28

10:00 a.m.

Elder:

Gerry Luebke

Ushers:

Steve & Alaric Hazen

Altar Guild:

Barb & Karl Kaeppler

Scripture Reader:

Steve Hazen

Door Locker:

Ken Thompson

Streaming:

Brianna Meyer



September 2025

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | 1 Labor Day Office Closed | 2 6pm Elder Meeting | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 10am Worship w/HC 11am Church Picnic | 8 | 9 10:30am Bible Study 6:15pm Board of Finance 7pm Church Council | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 10am Worship | 15 | 16 10:30am Bible Study | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 10am Worship w/HC 11am Voter's Meeting | 22 | 23 10:30am Bible Study | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 10am Worship | 29 | 30 10:30am Bible Study | | | | |