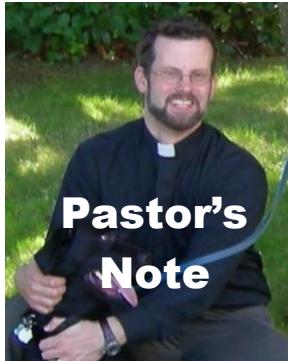


the Bethel Beam

Bethel Lutheran Church

March 2015



Pastor's Note

February 17, 2015

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Last month I wrote to you that “the future of Bethel is bright.” We reflected on the positive changes which have been made to align the church’s budget with a realistic picture of its finances.

We also looked at the deepening connections between our congregation and the greater community – especially in the area of the groups who operate out of the space known as “Bethel.”

I am writing to you today to reaffirm that “the future of Bethel is bright,” but to also continue to be honest about how exactly we can move towards that future. Please understand that I am not writing this because I want to upset anyone: I am writing this because, as your pastor, I need to model candor and mature conversation.

As many of you are well aware, during worship on February 15 I gave a candid message regarding the current financial state of the church. January’s offerings came in well under our expected total for the month, and February was on pace to do the same when I spoke to the congregation. Coupled with an unusually high set of January utilities, the final reserves for the church were used up balancing the month’s expenses. Under our budget projections for 2015 (which were solidly grounded in past income and expense numbers), it was reasonable to expect that this wasn’t going to be an issue for the year at all – let alone one month into it. However, this was not the case, and now we need to be honest with ourselves about how to move forward.

To cut to the chase: “Bethel, the building” and “Bethel, the worshiping community” have not been aligned for many years now. As things stand, in the eyes of the greater community we are a small piece of the puzzle that is “Bethel Lutheran Church.” We have a wide variety of groups operating out of this space, but our reason for hosting them has morphed over the years.

With rare exception, we no longer primarily host them as a form of community outreach and care; rather, we have welcomed them in as a means to support our financial bottom line. True, we’ve made a great deal of progress over the past few years developing deeper connections to the groups beyond rent – especially the other churches – but it’s OK for us to admit that that wasn’t the initial intent in hosting them. And it’s equally OK for us to admit that, without the added income from those groups, we’d have been forced to have this conversation years ago.

There is value in a ministry of hospitality and welcome. It’s clearly something needed by the greater community and we can take pride and satisfaction in being able to provide it. But, given our financial realities, we need to honestly ask ourselves: “Is that the ministry we want for Bethel? Is that the ministry we feel God calling us into?” Our building is expensive to operate: I won’t give you the list of things in need of upkeep or upgrade, but it’s not short. Even were those changes not needed, we’d still be faced with operational bills that exceed our congregational giving.

Related to that, I need to be frank that I have found myself increasingly investing the bulk of my energy into dealing with our ever-expanding number of hosted user groups and need to stop doing so: it’s not what you called me to do, and it’s not helping the church grow (numerically or spiritually). However, there’s been no other way to handle the property management responsibilities as they far exceed what a volunteer could be reasonably expected to manage (and no way for us to operate in this space without adding those responsibilities to our ministry).

If we are intent on staying in our current site, we need to look at a minimum of 4 changes to our stewardship:

For those who can, we need to increase our personal giving. While the help from the other groups is crucial, our own offering numbers have not tracked with our attendance and overall involvement for several years. There are many reasons for this, but the financial realities don’t change based on them.

We need to increase the rent of our user groups – but we need to understand that doing so won’t be nearly enough to “fill the gap.”

continued on p. 2

We need to embark on a campaign to bring in additional revenue. While the potential income from the groups would be nice, there is room for even more help were we able to present ourselves in ways that encouraged their individual members (as well as local residents in the community) to chip in. This would need to be an annual thing, though, and I cannot be responsible for it – that's not what you called me to do.

We need to move away from having a full-time pastor. Looking at our budget, it's undeniable that, currently, the only way to create space for a part-time property manager (which we badly need) is to reduce the costs associated with my call.

If we commit to these things, then we have a real shot at making it work: we could continue to operate a ministry of hospitality out of our current space for several years, and possibly even work with outside developers to renovate and improve portions of the property with this sort of outreach in mind. It is doable. But it requires a great deal of work from all of us, as well as an acceptance of our role as hosts: we cannot go down that road and then resent the other groups for their presence – it's self-defeating.

There are other options, though.

Hard as it might be to hear, we could sell off most or all of our current site, and then reinvest that money into a space more reflective of our current congregation. We could focus our attention on the worshiping community, tending to and growing it. While it would mean giving up "the building" as a symbol, it would also mean giving up "the building" as a responsibility – or, it could mean eventually buying or building a more modern space for us to call home. Depending on the details of a sale, we could possibly even create that new space somewhere on the current property. In essence, we would "reboot" the congregation and effectively transition into becoming a "new church start" of sorts – but one with a great deal more available resources than your standard new start.

I cannot pretend to have the same history in this space that many of you have, but, for what it's worth, I can relate to the idea of letting go of a church building. My home congregation completely remodeled itself a number of years ago, and on the occasions I've returned to visit there is nothing familiar left: effectively, it's a different church. And yet, if I am honest with myself, I recognize that they made the changes they made because it was the best means for them to grow in their calling as disciples of Christ. Similarly, we need to ask ourselves what it will take for us to grow – spiritually as well as numerically.

There is a possible third option. Our brothers and sisters at Prince of Peace Lutheran are in a similar financial

boat, and we could explore some sort of partnership or merger with them. If we did this, we would need to be deliberate about asking ourselves whether we were choosing this option out of fear ("Can we keep our building this way?") or out of a sense of ministry ("Can we best spread the gospel this way?"). Operating out of fear will not help us: all it will do is kick the can down the road in hopes that someone else will eventually deal with it – and that's not what we're about. Additionally, there would still be the possibility of needing to give up the existing facility in order to make this hypothetical new church configuration work in the long-term. It would entail a lot of deep discernment and conversation, but again, it is doable if it's what we feel called to do.

Elia Smith has generously offered to organize a series of house meetings similar to the ones we've done over the last few years. Obviously, Bethel's future direction will be the primary focus of these meetings. Once these are scheduled, I encourage you all to attend at least one so that your voice can be heard and you can be as well-informed as possible.

Currently, **we are planning on holding a vote on March 15 to discern the direction favored by the congregation.** This will NOT be a final vote concerning the future of the existing Bethel property. However, your elected leaders on the Church Council deserve to have a clear sense of what direction the congregation as a whole wants to take. We must approach this collectively and collaboratively: we're all on the same team in this situation – remember that.

As I told the congregation on February 15, I have NO intention of leaving Bethel. As far as I am concerned, I will stay as your pastor throughout this process of discernment and beyond. Even the reference to moving away from a full-time call isn't about me leaving: it's about creating financial space for us to do what we need to do in order to thrive. Not merely survive, but thrive.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about things at Bethel feel free to call, email, drop-by, etc: it is vital that we be willing to communicate about the future and approach it through mature conversation. Through God, all things are possible!

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."

Blessings to you in Christ,
Pastor Chris

PS

You can hear a recording of the message delivered to the congregation on February 15 by going to <http://www.bethellutheranchurch.org/sermons/>

Remember in prayer

Daily Member Prayer List

1 - Colin Rudnick
 2 - Chris Ode
 3 - Olive Kohanik
 4 - Cary Magill
 5 - Killian Rayborn
 6 - Nicole Anschell
 7 - Lillian Routledge
 8 - Nancy Phillips
 9 - Diana Holeman
 10 - Joshua DeLap
 11 - Iva Kjosnes
 12 - Dorothy Brown
 13 - Dick Hinea
 14 - Rita Ramstead
 15 - Tekla Woldegiorgis
 16 - Bev Baarstad
 17 - L1z Terrey
 18 - Beth Rudnick
 19 - Dick Schwerdtfeger
 20 - Phyllis Moll
 21 - Sarah Ode
 22 - John Vollbrecht
 23 - Travis Salmon
 24 - Karen Johnson
 25 - Mary Smith
 26 - Donnmae Gfeller
 27 - Anna Sjong
 28 - Kathy Carrow
 29 - Janet Jurgensen
 30 - Carla Salmon
 31 - Marlys Pickrell

Those who are coping with health problems

Don Brown
 Harold Crawford
 Mona Drake
 John Johns
 Olive Kohanik
 Harold & Joan Martinell
 Frank Moll
 Shirley Pishaw
 Elia Smith

Those living in nursing homes or assisted living

Vera Anderson
 Donnmae Gfeller
 Ellen Hansen
 Dick Hinea
 Iva Kjosnes
 Karen Schoeld
 Donna Sjoquist
 Dorothy Storseth
 Mary Smith

CELEBRATE
MARCH



- 1 - Bev Baarstad
 Karen Johnson
- 13 - Jeremy DeLap
 Diana Holeman
- 20 - Tinsu Abraha
 Mona Drake
- 21 - Karen Bauer
- 22 - Sarah Ode
- 25 - Nikolas Grigsby
- 26 - Bruce Smith
- 27 - Chuck Vollbrecht
- 30 - Chris Pickrell

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Look for a flyer in the Bethel Week on March 3 and 10 to order Easter flowers. The price of the flowers has not been confirmed, but we estimate the cost



- 6 - Karen Johnson
- 11 - Mary Smith
- 16 - Donnmae Gfeller
- 17 - Stephanie Vollbrecht
- 19 - Anna Sjong
- 28 - Kathy Carrow
- 31 - Janet Jurgensen



SPRING CLEANING AT BETHEL



WHEN: March 21-22
 March 27-28

TIME: Fridays - anytime after noon
 Saturdays - 9:00 AM



Coffee will be available downstairs.



If you like the great out-doors, bring gloves and tools. If you like the indoors bring gloves, buckets and rags to clean the sanctuary pews (**Saturdays**) and wash windows. The kitchen (**see Judy**) will also need your loving care. There will be a poster in the narthex with a list of items needed to be taken care of.

More hands make a lighter load!



OUR MEMBERS

So after 3 years as your pastor, I've been asked to do something I never took care of previously: write a mini-autobiography so you can get to know your "new" pastor! Oops: I guess that should have been something I took care of awhile ago...

I was born in Auburn, WA as the youngest of three kids. My siblings are both significantly older (12-13 years or so), which means I was effectively an only child growing up (though we all get along great now!). As a result, though, I bonded tightly with many of my friends in the neighborhood: we'd ride our bikes in the hills and explore the woods behind the house searching for treasures and excitement. My father worked for Boeing and Lutheran Brotherhood (and then Boeing again), and my mother has been working in the office of our home congregation even longer than Bethel's had Judy! (crazy, I know)

I was a bit of a shy kid (believe it or not) up until a friend convinced me to audition for a musical in junior high. Something about the experience really resonated with me, and I quickly became active in other theater productions over the years. In 2002 this led to me forming an improvisational comedy troupe with a group of friends from college – it was a ton of fun, and something I've always enjoyed ever since.

Sarah and I also met in 2002 through a mutual friend from Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma) – we married in 2004. I went to seminary for 2 years in Berkeley, CA, before heading to a rural site in North Central Ohio for a year of internship. It was a fantastic experience, and I truly bonded with the pastor who served as my "supervisor." Sadly, he died in 2009 shortly after I was ordained into ministry. During our final year in Berkeley, 2008, Tavin was born – just a week after classes started! Balancing

school, a newborn, and preparations for a first call into ministry wasn't easy, but we made it work.

My first call took us to Chinook, on the southwestern coast of Washington. It's a small fishing village with a population barely over half of my high school graduating class (the 2010 census listed 467 people). We enjoyed it on the coast, but my father's health (he'd been hit by a drunk driver in 1996) prompted us to seek a call closer to home (and that's where you guys come in!). Archer was born shortly after we arrived at Bethel (can you believe it's already been so long!), but most of you were here for that. When not doing "pastor things," I really enjoy games: board games, card games, puzzles, video games – you name it, and I'm probably interested in giving it a shot. With the little ones, though, it's not always easy to find time for such play (I've actually been playing around with the idea of creating a new worship service out of gaming). My family – immediate and extended – has also always been very important to me, and the arrival of Sarah's middle sister (and her family) to Tacoma a couple of years ago means that nearly all of our relatives (on both sides) are now in the Northwest. Another long-standing passion is trivia – or just information in general: my parents used to give me a copy of the World Almanac every year for Christmas, and you can only imagine how much I enjoy "surfing the web."

Blessings to you and yours: it's been a great 3 years together, and I am excited to see what the future has in store for our ministry together!

Pastor Chris

THANK YOU!

God's love is clearly shining through the kindness of good people like you.

ON behalf of the Board of Shoreline Community Care, I want to thank you for your generous gift \$457.60 during the year 2014. With your help, Shoreline Community Care has provided hope and support to many Shoreline residents. We are always looking for volunteers willing to help with this ministry. If you or anyone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact me or any of the Board members. Again, thank you so much for your help and prayerful support during this past year.

This ministry would not have been possible without the office space you provide us. Thank you!



An interesting newsletter sent by TourComm Germany on behalf of Thüringer Tourismus GmbH/Thuringia Tourist Board and Investigations- und Marketinggesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt mbH/Investment and Marketing Corporation Saxony-Anhalt.

Martin Luther: the fastest selling Playmobil figure ever!

In 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to a church door in Wittenberg, Germany, he changed the history of the world. Now, just two years before the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, a tiny model of the Great Reformer has made history – in the world of toys!

Known for its sets of little plastic figures, Playmobil, the German toy manufacturer, has created a miniature Luther. Dressed in a cloak and hat, he holds a quill in his right hand and a copy of the Bible in the other. The Good Book is, of course, in German: one of Luther's many achievements was translating the scriptures into the vernacular, so that all German-speakers could read it.

In a mere 72 hours, all 34,000 of Luther figures had sold. "That's the fastest-selling toy of all time," according to a Playmobil spokesperson. Now their factory has dropped everything to make more of these highly-collectible mini-Luthers. Created as an educational toy for Germany's Evangelical Lutheran Church, almost all of the figures have been sold in Germany. The next batch won't be released until the end of April.

There have even been requests for Playmobil to design a miniature Wartburg Castle. Famous as the place where Luther translated the Bible into German, this castle is outside the city of Eisenach in LutherCountry.

For the past eight years, the German federal states of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia have been building up to 2017 and the world-wide celebrations of Martin Luther and his achievements.

SHAREHOUSE PROGRAM



HELP US TURN HOUSING INTO HOMES!

Since 1989, The Sharehouse has been distributing new and still-useful furniture and other household items to families and individuals transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing.

YOU CAN HELP BY DONATING FURNITURE AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS!

THE SHAREHOUSE Furniture: Mattresses, box springs, dressers, tables, chairs, desks Linens: Sheets and pillow cases, blankets, bath and kitchen towels, pillows Kitchen: Pots and pans, cooking utensils, dishes, flatware, small appliances Accessories & Miscellaneous: Lamps, rugs, TVs, clocks, decorative items Cleaning supplies: Vacuums, mops, sponges, detergent, surface cleaner Hygiene Products: Full size, new personal hygiene supplies. For more information on what we can accept visit <http://www.thesharehouse.org> or call 207/767-5280.

The Sharehouse is a program of the Church Council of Greater Seattle

2ND SUNDAY BREAKFAST MARCH 8



You are invited to join us for our March breakfast on March 8th following our worship service.

Cost: \$3.00 Children under 5 free.

UPDATE FROM TOM AND MARY HOLMAN



Thank you for your prayers for the February workshop in Jos, Nigeria. All of the Fali and Sukur translators came, and they made good progress on drafting the script of the Jesus Film from their translation of the Gospel of Luke.

Please pray that they would be able to continue to work while they're in their home areas. The Boko Haram insurgents have been driven out of there, but they are still active in areas not too far away, which is unsettling for the translators. **Pray** that the Boko Haram would be completely disbanded.

Tom leaves for Nigeria on Thursday, February 26, for three weeks, to work with the Sukur translator and the Kamo translation team. **Pray** for safety, good health, and a productive time as they work together. **Pray** also for the Nigerian elections, which will take place March 28 and April 11.

Yours in Christ,

Mary

Mary (and Tom) Holman

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tom_holman@sil.org

Mailing Address: 7611 36th Ave. North #215, New Hope, MN 55427

Phones: Tom: 651-726-4581,
Mary: 262-497-4085

SPRING LUNCHEON

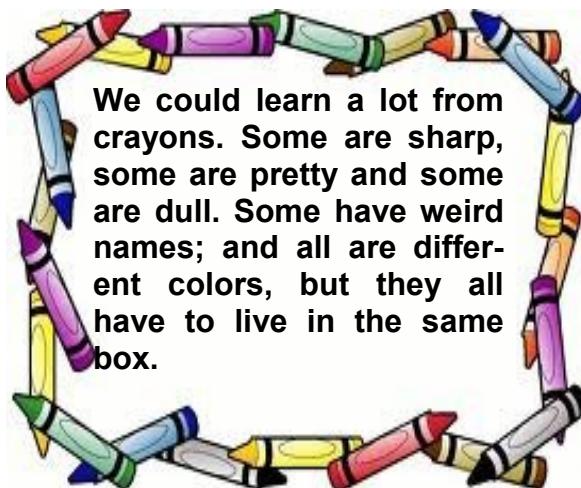


May 2 - 11:30 AM

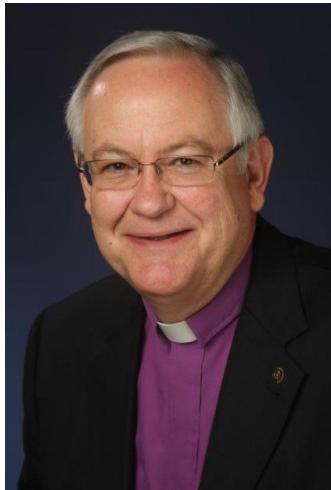
Be sure and set aside this date and time!!!

The "TOTAL EXPERIENCE GOSPEL CHOIR" is coming to entertain us and we will have a great lunch! DON't miss it! Invite your friends. Men, women and children will enjoy!!

The Total Experience Gospel Choir bursts with love, joy and enthusiasm - humanity! It is hailed as one of the Pacific Northwest's finest soulful ensembles. Pastor Patrinell Staten Wright started the group as a gospel music class at Seattle's Franklin High School in 1973. Since then the choir has grown to become a nationally and internationally known gospel singing group. Tickets go on sale this month at a cost of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 5-10. Under 5 free.



News for the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America March 2015



Return to the Lord our God for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. I had on my desk for years a small wooden block with the etched saying, "God give me patience and give it to me now!"

It was a helpful corrective to me as a young pastor because I just could hardly tolerate the slow pace by which I saw change taking

place in the life of the congregation. It was only after I had been there for several years that I discovered how long it takes before trust can be established. Even then the pace has to be just on the edge of the community's discomfort level. This is such a challenging balance for leaders to navigate. On the one hand you have to establish a sense of trust, stability and confidence. On the other hand you have to push for change, disrupt the system and modulate the level of disappointment that it creates. It was living within this tension that began to teach me the importance of patience. I was equally challenged at home trying to learn patience with our four daughters. I was not good at it and marveled at how Kim was able to keep her cool. I was often the one acting like the two year old. It finally was through the help of a counselor

that I had a break through. She said to me, "Kirby, you need to lower your expectations and allow your children to be children." It was a painful lesson to learn but one that continues to provide me with dividends.

Two years ago during the summer boating season I was preparing to trailer our boat to the launch. It meant opening the large side gate on our property. In the process of doing so the hinge of the gate smashed my middle finger and blackened the nail. Jesus and I exchanged a few words and as the pain subsided I continued to ready the boat. Would you believe that finger nail has not yet completely restored itself? In fact, at the rate that it is healing I would imagine it will be almost two years to the date before there is no sign of the injury. It is a reminder to me that the whole creation moves at a very different pace. Friends I believe that the times that we are living in as a church call for patience. God is at work continuing to call, gather and sanctify but not at the rate of speed we demand. These times call for us to slow down, breathe deeply and listen carefully.

We need to allow the Season of Lent to be the gift that it is intended to be. Let Lent be a time that interrupts the pace of our lives, calls us back to God, and stills our hearts so that we can know, as the Psalmist sings, "God is a gracious and merciful, SLOW to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

GRADE SCHOOL RETREAT AT CAMP LUTHERWOOD

March 20, 7pm - March 21, 7pm

Time to get registered! All students in grades 1-5 are invited to go to Lutherwood for a weekend jam-packed with fun, songs, games, and Bible study! The theme for the weekend will be WTL, and they will learn all about how Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Register online at camplutherwood.org

Bethel Beam

Special dates in March

Lenten Service at Bethel	4
Daylight Savings begins	8
Lenten Service at Prince of Peace	11
<u>Important Congregational Meeting</u>	<u>15</u>
St. Patrick's Day	17
Lenten Service at Bethel	18
1st Day of Spring	20
Lenten Service at Prince of Peace	25



Will you be
late?
**DON'T
FORGET!**
Daylight
savings starts!
**SPRING
FORWARD!!**
MARCH 8

Bethel Lutheran Church
17418 8th Ave NE
Shoreline, WA 98155
Phone: 206-362-4334
bethel@
bethellutheranchurch.org

Pastor
Chris Ode

Secretary
Judy Goulet

Accompanist
Ben Dobyns

Bookkeeper
Kathy Carrow

Security
Bruce Lemmon

Office Hours
Tuesday-Wednesday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Thursday
8 AM - Noon

Lunch Hour
12:30-1:30 PM

Regular Worship
Schedule
9:30 AM

Education

Adult - 8:15 AM
Adult - 11:00 AM

Communion
1st & 3rd Sundays

Following worship on March 15, there will be a special congregational meeting to discuss the direction for Bethel's future ministry. See Pastor Chris' article for details.



LENT/EASTER 2015

All services begin at 7 PM

Mar 4 - Lent 2 (BLC)
Mar 11 - Lent 3 (POP)
Mar 18 - Lent 4 (BLC)
Mar 25 - Lent 5 (POP)

Apr 2 - Maundy Thursday
(Seder at POP, time to
be decided)
Apr 3 - Good Friday
(Noon - POP) (7pm -

Apr 4 - Easter Vigil (7pm - BLC)
Apr 5 - Easter Sunday (each church doing
its own thing, but for Bethel it's
7am and 9:30am)



BLC = Bethel Lutheran Church
POP = Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
14514 20th Ave NE
Shoreline

