



Bethesda Lutheran Church
"Welcome One Another"

The Visitor

October 2011

305 Saint Ronan Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511 • (203) 787-2346

Find this newsletter also on the web at bethesdanewhaven.org

Congregation Meeting October 2

following Worship

Following worship on Sunday, October 2, the council has called for a special congregational meeting to vote whether to engage the Christian consulting group Kairos led by Pastor Renee LiaBraaten to guide us in discerning our potential and conducting a capital campaign for Bethesda. Please consider attending to learn more and participate in the future of our ministry together.

Blessing of the Animals Sunday, October 2, 3:00 pm in Bethesda's Rose Garden

Bring your pet, or come to join the blessing

St. Francis of Assisi (13th century) renewed the church as he rejected a life of wealth to serve the poor. He wrote the "Canticle of the Sun," which includes these words: *Praise be to my Lord for our mother earth, that which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth diverse fruits, and flowers of many colours and grass....*

Francis also brought attention to the celebration of Christmas, which he felt was understated by many. He had someone construct a crib, and nearby tethered a donkey and an ox. On Christmas Eve he led his friends to the place, and told of the wonder of the Ruler of the World coming to birth as a baby. For centuries following, the custom of placing a crèche became part of Christian practice at Christmas.

Because of Francis' great love for creation, many churches are holding a Blessing of Animals around the date that commemorates Francis' death, October 4.

On Sunday, October 2, at 3:00 pm in Bethesda's Rose Garden (between St. Ronan Street and the worship space) we will sing songs about the creatures that offer companionship to us. We will introduce the animals that reduce our stress when we pet them, and give thanks for their part in our lives. Bring your dog, your cat, your guinea pig, your iguana, your python.

All God's critters got a place in the choir, some sing low, some sing higher, some sing out loud on the telephone wire, some just clap their hands, or paws, or anything they got now.



Join us on
a hayride!

Churchwide Hay Ride

The whole Bethesda family is invited to this fun fall event on **Sunday, Oct. 16** after church.

Please let Natalie Judd know that you can come so we have enough wagons!

NOON: Bring your own lunch to church

12:30 PM: Drive to Schreiber Farm, Oxford, CT (Carpooling)

2:00 PM Hayride (one stop to have doughnuts and cider)

5 PM Return to Bethesda





Bethesda's Shelter Meal Ministry

SHELTER MEALS Organizing the evening meal at Immanuel Baptist Shelter:

- * In October – Katie and Martin Gehner
- * In November – Kay and Leon Linquist
- * In December - Bjorkman family and youth

Interested in taking part in this ministry? Visit www.bethesdanewhaven.org for a complete description or contact Carole DeVore, who schedules volunteers, at devore280@comcast.net or [203-281-3725](tel:203-281-3725).

Save the Date: Saturday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m. Cabaret at Bethesda

Back by popular demand!

Hosted by Kristin Huffman and featuring Maggie Astrup, Richard Ford, Scott Perkins, Brett Judson and Lars Gjerde.

The free will offering will offset the cost of a harpsichord for Bethesda.

Call the church office (203-787-2346) or email Lars Gjerde (music@bethesdanewhaven.org) to reserve your spot!!

Wednesday Morning Bible Study



Our current *Book of Faith* series of study is on *Miracles*. We will explore the mystery of Jesus' actions and love, what they accomplished, and how they impact our faith and trust in the *Good News* of Jesus' resurrection. We live daily in God's promises and are blessed by Jesus' living example. Dates for the next sessions are October 12 and 26, and November 9 and 23.

You are invited to join us from 8:00 to 9:00 am as we gather for light breakfast followed by Bible readings and lively discussions. Let God's Word grow in every heart and live daily in His service.

Everyone is invited !

Music news:

Lars is starting music sessions for the youth. Practice will happen in the chapel twice a month and the teens will be seen and heard in worship soon! The choir is working hard for the Reformation Concert, which will feature large works by Bach and others. Set aside October 30 at 4pm. Please invite your friends! Also, talk to Lars if you want to offer your gifts in the music program!

Meal Hospitality



Do you know where all of the paper cups are kept?

Would you like to help welcome one another in an important way? With the departure of Joan Gibney (previously active on the Hospitality committee) Bethesda could use one or more individuals to help with our very important ministry of eating. This type of serving may involve, but need not be limited to, funeral receptions, potluck preparations, coffee hour helpers, and general looking after of our meal related items and goings-on. Please let Pastor or Nora Lee know if you can serve and welcome in this important way.

From the Pastor

Holy Cross, Batman!



The emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Constantine, collaborated with his counterpart in the Licinius, to decree the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., effectively lifting persecution of Christians and paving the way toward a new era in Christian practices. Constantine gave his mother Helena the use of the empire's treasury to explore the relics of the Christian tradition. Included in her treasure hunt was the uncovering of the cross on which Christ died, reportedly discovered in Jerusalem after razing a temple dedicated to Venus. Constantine ordered the building on that site what is known today as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the dedication of that church was commemorated on September 14, 335 A.D., Holy Cross Day.

On Holy Cross Day, September 14, 1986, I was asked this question *Before almighty God, to whom you must give account, and in the presence of this assembly, I ask: Will you assume this office, believing that the church's call is God's call to the ministry of word and sacrament?* My answer: **I will, and I ask God to help me.**

And the rest is, as they say, history. I have believed again and again that the church in which I have plotted my vocation has issued God's call. I have assumed, as it were, the office. And I have asked God, over and over again to help me.

In his revision of the Mass, Martin Luther emphasized what has become called the Twin Peaks of the liturgy: **Word** and **Sacrament**.

While growing up as a churchy kind of kid, it was in the renewal of the liturgy through the publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* and my coincidental enrollment at Valparaiso University that my interest in ministry became deepened.

There was joy in the liturgy! There were new hymns, and interesting hymns from the gamut of the church's history! In that university setting, there was attentiveness to the rituals, where they might become a kind of practice for what was lived, which popped my eyes open. The eucharist was given a weekly emphasis. And I got to sing, a lot.

Five congregations later, a measure of study and practice in liturgical theology and music, and twenty-five years later, I still in my heart of hearts enjoy the rhythms of the church in its weekly assembly at worship. I like to preach. I like to preside at eucharist, and baptisms. I am honored to be entrusted with pastoral care. And I still like to sing.

I thank Bethesda for affirming my call to ministry, now one year after arriving in New Haven, and twenty-five years after an ordination service on Holy Cross Day, where there was incense, wonderful music, a wine and cheese reception, and an acolyte fainted. Awesome!

Pastor Tim Keyl



Ordained ministry is table service. That is why we ordain people. We train them. We invite them to come deeper into the life-giving meaning and the world-reversing discipline of the gospel table. We urge them to consider and interiorize the paradox that we seek to have strong leaders who are table servers. Then, at the invitation of a concrete assembly and in communion with as much of the church as possible, we pray for them to be used by the Spirit in the life-giving order of the table: gathering, word, meal, sending.

--Gordon Lathrop, *The Pastor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, © 2006), p 67.

Learning Hour



Adult Forum

Join us every Sunday from 11-12 in the Parish House Living Room for informative conversation about topics that are important to our Christian community. Please see our exciting schedule for the

fall (subject to change). Some of the speakers are members our congregation and others are members of our community who will share with us their expertise.

Have a cup of coffee or tea and a coffee cake (or more), and join others at the Living Room!!

October:

2- Congregational Meeting (no forum)

9 - Speaker: Frances "Bitsie" Clark, executive director of East Rock Village

East Rock Village, Inc. is "a private not-for-profit corporation founded to provide residents of the greater East Rock neighborhood of New Haven, Hamden, and North Haven with opportunities, services, and confidence they need to remain active participants in the life of the community, living their lives to the fullest as they grow older in the comfort of their own homes." (from the East Rock Village Mission Statement)

16- Reformation Cantata- Lars Gjerde

23- New England Companion trip to Palestine- Pastor Keyl

30- Health Initiative: CT for a New Economy (Adam Marchand)

November:

6- Luther House-Kari Henkelmann Keyl

13 - Speaker: Lisa Farren, Good News Garage Hartford.

Good News Garage was established by Lutheran Social Services in 1996 with a small group of congregations and volunteers in Burlington, VT. "Since then LSS has opened Good News Garage programs in Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut, Sturbridge Massachusetts, and Manchester, New Hampshire."¹

Good News Garage "provides reliable used cars to low-income individuals and families who, without transportation would lose their jobs... or be denied access to job training." (from the Good News Garage brochure)

20- Social statements: Genetics

27 - Intergenerational Sunday

December:

4- Trip to Palestine: Dianne and Richard

11- Mission Endowment Fund

18- World Hunger

Sunday School

New Baby and Toddler Class is a Hit!

With five children aged around 2 to 18 months, the new Sunday school baby and toddler class adds its joyful hum to the education wing during learning hour. This mommy-and-me style class is formally listed as being led by Nora Lee, but it is clear to all with experience with this age cohort, that Dalia, Henry, "grosse Greta," "kleine Greta," and Luisa are the true leaders. Snacks are consumed, beautiful board books (contributed by Elaine Ramshaw) are explored, songs are sung, stories are heard, sleep schedules are compared, and fellowship is enjoyed!

Learning Hour

Calendar

October 2- Blessing of animals at Church (3:00 PM)

October 9 - Collection of items for "Gift of the Heart" School Kits

October 16 - Hay Ride - **all are invited**

(See front page)



Congratulations Pastor Lorraine Peterson



Stewardship Commitment Sunday is October 23

Someone said *Stewardship is everything you do after you say "I believe."* In the gospel stories from Matthew that we are hearing, Jesus emphasizes that this world, this life, is a gift from a generous God. Bethesda is a community that seeks to live in that generosity. So we serve a monthly shelter meal. So we welcome new babies into our communal life. So we offer concerts that benefit local ministries. So we utilize our building, gather for meals, go to basketball and football games, study the Bible, and beautify an apartment, all in the name of Christ. During the month of October, you will hear about the ways of Stewardship at Bethesda. You will receive a pledge card where you can indicate your monetary offerings for the mission and ministry of our congregation. Be generous, as God is generous.

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, **generosity**, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5.22)*

Pastor Keyl, on behalf of the Stewardship Committee



Holiday Fair – November 12

Once again we will have frozen pies for sale. They will be made by the fair work group – and you, if you'd like to help! – on Oct. 10th. We will be taking orders for them on Sundays through Oct. 9th. Or you can call Maureen Anderson at 203-488-4993 or email her at karlandmaur@yahoo.com to order. We will be making apple and pumpkin pies priced at \$10 each. Pies will be ready for pick-up on Oct. 23, Commitment Sunday.

Tickets for the quilt raffle will be available along with pictures of the quilt if you can sell tickets to family, friends, and coworkers. This year the tickets will be \$2 each, with a book of 6 tickets available for \$10.

Trash and Treasure items may be brought to church during Oct. Please leave items on the stage. Please do not bring in clothing, books or furniture. We just do not have room! Janis Underwood will be leading this venture and Jan Hebel and Molly Dinneen will be helping.

Saturday, November 5th we will be putting together the soups and cookies in jars. Please see Sue Berube if you can help.

We also need people to bake cakes and pies, cookies or bread and people to help the day of the fair. You can see Sue or Maureen to volunteer or get more information.



Reformation Sunday, October 30 Bethany Miriam Henkelmann Keyl to be Confirmed

That's Bethany on the right, next to Pastor Becca Middeke-Conlin at the Synod Assembly "Doing What Matters" program. See how cheerful she is? She will probably have the same smile on Sunday, October 30, when surrounded by family and church community, she will be renewed in faith through the laying on of hands and as she publicly affirms her baptism into the life of Christ. (She was baptized at the Easter Vigil in Rutland, Vermont in 1997!)

Pray for Bethany in her commitment to follow Christ, and in the ways she already has shone forth the light of God. Look to celebrate with her on October 30th. And be renewed yourselves, as we recall the reformation of the church assisted in large part by someone named Martin Luther.

From our Parish Assistant

Is God fair? This is a question we struggled with recently (Sept. 18), which was incidentally my first Sunday serving as a liturgical assistant at Bethesda, and my second time teaching Sunday School. In keeping with the message of the Gospel reading – Matt. 20:1–16; the workers in the vineyard – God’s mysterious and abundant grace was shown in the service by two sacraments: baptism and communion. I think there is a correlation here, because thinking about sacraments and grace is a good starting point for reflecting on God’s justice. And it is a good thing that we have a starting point, for the issue of justice is difficult. The owner of the vineyard paid the same amount to the people joining in at the end as those who had been there since the beginning. For me, at least at first glance this sounds unjust, for it makes me think back at the many times I have felt I have worked hard without getting the proper reward. How many of us haven’t felt like that, justly so?

Getting ready to teach Sunday school (3rd-4th graders), I was mentally preparing to tackle these hard questions, preparing, in fact, to hear the kids say that God is being unfair. Looking back, I think this ominous feeling was mostly caused by my own struggle with the text. I was still not sure how this parable translated into a just and fair God. In fact, the kids (or at least those who seemed interested in the topic) had a very different reaction. One child said she thought the owner is a really nice guy. Another affirmed his justice. The generosity of the owner was what had sunk in, and didn’t seem to contradict justice. The kids taught me a lesson.

We must always look at God’s justice in light of his generosity. Everything that happened last Sunday tells us that. Baptism was given freely to a child. Communion was for us all. Both are vehicles of God’s generosity. Like St. Augustine says, they are outward signs of an inward reality, and that reality is one of abundance and grace. In the parable in Matthew 20, Jesus tells of a God who is just and who likes to be generous. The children in Sunday school were better prepared to accept this than I was. Like most people, I have my own (very human) concept of justice. God is just. But can we accept his generosity?

Oscar Lied
Parish Assistant

All Saints’ Sunday, November 6 Remembering Loved Ones on All Saints’ Sunday, Nov 6

We will remember those from Bethesda’s community who have died since last All Saints’:

Katherina Nedila †
Bob Fries †
Eric B. Larson †
Johanne Pedersen †
Mildred McMann †
Dot Palcovich †
Alice E. Anderson †

In addition to those from Bethesda’s community who have died since last All Saints’, we will be remembering aloud loved ones from the circle of family and friends. If you have a loved one that either you will name during our prayers, or would like named, please send that name and your connection to that name to Clare at Administrator@bethesda.newhaven.org or call the church office (203-787-2346) by November 1. Please indicate whether you will be naming them aloud or if you would like the assisting minister to name them.

Council Corner



The Council was delighted to welcome two new staff members to Bethesda: Parish Assistant Oscar Lied and Caretaker Chloe Groth. Oscar is very glad to be serving in a parish and feels very welcome. Chloe is getting to know the building, tracking things that need to be

done, and identifying projects to tackle. Pastor Keyl reflected on his one-year anniversary at Bethesda and his twenty-five years as a pastor. He urged us to lead the congregation in telling stories of our ministry and not just of our capital building needs.

The two task forces still at work since the leadership retreat gave updates. Martin Gehner presented an excellent final report from the **Facilities Planning Task Force**, delineating Bethesda's building needs and possibilities for repair and renovation. The Council received it with gratitude for his work and that of the group. Dianne Witte presented the plan for the **Financing Task Force** to conduct an Adult Forum on September 25 to highlight the Task Force's work and the Council's calling of an October 2 special congregational meeting to vote on engaging Kairos & Associates to consult with Bethesda on a capital campaign.

The Council appreciated receiving written reports from two committees. For the Executive Committee, Katie Gehner presented her good work developing a building use policy, application form, and donation request guidelines and received comments and suggestions from the Council. Maggie Astrup reported for the Worship and Music Committee that music director Lars Gjerde would like the church to purchase a harpsichord and that a generous gift of \$5,000 had already been made toward it. The Council shared thoughts with the Committee about their plan to raise further funds in part by means of a cabaret, which Kristin Huffman offered to present. Dianne noted that the Finance Committee was pursuing a state program to install solar panels at no cost to Bethesda. Treasurer Ian Bjorkman brought us up to date on the congregation's finances, noting that we have drawn substantially from special funds to meet payroll and pay bills and that our offerings are still somewhat behind in achieving our challenge budget.

Dianne Witte, Congregation President



Special Thanks to all of our Bethesda friends for sponsoring us in the Walk to Defeat ALS on September 11.

Our team, **Poppy's Posse**, earned a total of \$3,415.00 for the cause. It was a beautiful, celebratory day at Lighthouse Point Park, and the grand total raised by all teams participating was \$96,213.99! It was certainly a grand showing and a successful walk. Thanks again for your support.

Clare & Chris Couture

Casserole switcheroo?

After the Sept. 11 potluck Becky Lerud took home an oval casserole thinking it was hers only to discover it is larger than the one she brought. If you brought home a smaller one, please find Becky to make an exchange!

T	Time Talent Treasure	<i>An update on offerings to Bethesda...</i>
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2010		2011		Ahead/(Behind)
<i>As of 9/26</i>	\$108,251.68	<i>As of 9/25</i>	\$115,650.22	7%
Year end	\$158,237.00	Budget	\$176,000.00	

Building Bethesda Together II – Facilities Planning Report Completed

Martin Gehner, on behalf of the Facilities Planning Task Force, presented the group’s excellent report to the Council at its September meeting. He reviewed the Task Force’s approach to the effort: grouping Bethesda’s facilities renovations needs into four phases, some of which could occur simultaneously and with resources of different kinds – from congregation members tackling more routine repairs using an annual maintenance fund, to projects undertaken as memorial funds become available, to large scale repairs by professionals that would need substantial funding. Martin praised the members of the Task Force for their hard work, and the Council received the report with great appreciation. Please add your thanks to these dedicated folks when you see them: Martin Gehner, Chair; Maureen Anderson, Chris Couture, Paul Stuehrenberg, Elaine Watson, Spencer Young



New England Synod Companion Trip to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Palestine November 1-15

³God shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; ⁴but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. (Micah 4:3-4)

The prophet Micah spoke volumes to ancient Israel, an Israel that was comfortable with its power. The church continues to speak truth to power with a prophetic voice. Even a bumper stickers preach as it says *Know Peace Know Justice*.

A group of six, including Pastor Keyl, Dianne Witte, and Richard Ford will hear the testimony of those who strive for peace with justice in our travels from November 1-15, 2011.

We will connect with the Palestinian Lutherans who make a difference in their churches, schools, and social service programs.

We will learn about the issues of land, borders, and violence from Israeli and Palestinian organizations.

We will see with our own eyes a land that is holy for three major world religions, to capture the longing for unity and understand the fractious developments.

Immersing ourselves in the culture, we will stay at Palestinian Christian Guest Houses in Jerusalem, on the West Bank, and in Galilee.

We will pick olives on the Mount of Olives, destined for olive oil used by Augusta Victoria Hospital.

We will also learn of the important ministry of the Lutheran World Federation in Jerusalem.

We will take a three-day excursion to the Sea of Galilee, to see the places where Jesus lived, taught, and ministered.

We will tour the Old City, particularly marking the three holy places for three religions: The Western Wall (Jewish), The Dome of the Rock (Muslim), and The Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Christian).

We will see sites rooted in Jewish identity, Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial) and Massadah.

We will take a day’s excursion to the desert and the Dead Sea.

Pastor Keyl will lead this group, also utilizing local tour guides and charter buses.

Pray for this to be a meaningful trip, and look for blog entries, photographs, and presentations.