



## Bethesda Lutheran Church

"Welcome One Another"

# *The Visitor*

February 2011

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

### Highlights from the Annual Meeting

January 30, 2011

The Annual Meeting of Bethesda took place following worship Sunday, January 30, 2011.

Congregation President Dianne Witte opened the meeting with thanks to Pastor William Preuss for the service he offered to our congregation as an interim pastor. Pastor Timothy Keyl thanked Bethesda for the discernment process which led to his call, and for the warm welcome which he has received. He continued to highlight six commitments to Bethesda for the coming year that are a part of his ministry plan. These include a commitment to a creative and meaningful liturgical life, a commitment to mission critical building issues and helping Bethesda to become more engaged as a missional congregation. He is also committed to strengthening our local, synodical and global partnerships in advocacy for the needy, to building our sense of discipleship through community events and study, and to being mindful in his leadership of balancing work, recreation and rest to best show God's grace.

Ministry Reports were delivered by Committee Chairpersons. The Nominating Committee presented the following candidates for election: For Church Council, 2 year vacancy; Chloe Groth. For Church Council, four year vacancies: Maureen Anderson, Lisa Randall, and Mark Wimmer. For the Mission Endowment Fund: Natalie Judd and Don Youngberg. For the Nominating Committee 2012: Ellen Doon, Leslie Dunn, Richard Ford and Donna Slater. No other nominations were received. The Secretary cast one ballot for the election of the nominees.

Treasurer Ian Bjorkman pointed out the lack of discretionary funds in our budget, and encouraged members to think of increasing their giving a few dollars every week if they can.

Dianne Witte highlighted five building projects that have been deemed mission critical for Bethesda. These include renovation of the Campanius Room kitchen, repairing the roofs on the Education Wing and Parish House, replacing and updating the Fire Alarm System, and repairs to the Chapel Apartment. These projects total \$200,000, and the Council is exploring funding possibilities.

The meeting was followed by a lunch which included soup made by the Youth of Bethesda.

**Remember that  
You Are Dust:**

**Ash Wednesday**

**is March 9, with**

**liturgies at noon and**

**7:30 pm in the Church**

**Nave (the worship space)**

Ash Wednesday is the Christian equivalent of *Yom Kippur*, a Day of Atonement.

On our knees we will confess our human faults and sin. We will be reminded of our mortality with the tracing of the cross with ashes. We will begin the march toward Lenten renewal, wizened, and heading toward Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem. Join others on this holy day.



**On Wednesdays in Lent**

we will continue to gather in prayer at two times:

Noon in the Chapel followed by a shared bag lunch; and

6:00 pm with soup supper in the Parish House dining room, followed by a time of conversation and prayer in the Chapel.

**40 Days and 40 Nights:  
Devotional Book by Gail**

**Ramshaw.** If you'd like to use a devotional book with others at Bethesda for each day in Lent, put in your order with Clare at [bethesda@snet.net](mailto:bethesda@snet.net) or at the church office. Deadline for ordering is February 20. Cost will be \$5.00.

## Help Fight Hunger in Our Community

Christian Community Action's Food Pantry provides groceries on a monthly basis to about 650 families, seniors and persons with disabilities. About 50 percent of those served are children. The vast majority of the people served live in the Hill section of New Haven and come to the Pantry for food. Because they recognize that hunger has no geographic boundaries however, they sometimes help families who do not live in the Hill and who cannot come to the Pantry.

Bethesda supports CCA's efforts in different ways. Church members bring non-perishable food to church and leave it in the grocery cart in the Narthex. Bob Balay regularly delivers the food to CCA for distribution. We also send monetary donations to CCA both from congregational offerings and from Music Series concert collections.

**Mark your calendar!** Bestselling author, columnist and host and creator of Public Radio's *A Prairie Home Companion*, **Garrison Keillor** will be coming to New Haven this year for a one-man performance that will benefit CCA. The performance, which will be Keillor's only one in CT in 2011, will be on **Monday, Nov. 14, 2011**. More details will be forthcoming.

Treasurer Ian Bjorkman and Finance Committee Chair Linda Cortright



presented a 2011 draft budget, and the Council discussed and approved it. The Council agreed with the Finance Committee's recommendation to challenge the congregation to give ten percent more than currently pledged for the year and to give ten percent of our offerings to the New England Synod for the ministry of the ELCA, a percentage decrease of one and a half percent. Dianne Witte presented a draft of the budget for Building Bethesda Together II, the effort to address the mission critical repairs needed to our building, and it was approved for presentation at the annual meeting. Doug Gray provided an estimate for the cost to renovate the chapel apartment, which will be necessary to accomplish in order to hire a caretaker.



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Again, a number of folks stepped forward to help out with all of the special arrangements for the Christmas holidays:

Maureen Anderson – Picked up the wreaths, which were displayed in the Sanctuary and throughout the building during the Advent and Christmas seasons, from our supplier.

Barbara Stark –decorated and put up the wreaths and put the lights on the Christmas tree along with her helpers. They also located the Chrismons which were so carefully put away last year that we had difficulty finding them. The Altar Guild members assisted with decorating the church with beautiful poinsettia plants. Thanks to all!

Joanne Kimball –Decorated the Parish House for Christmas using the greens available following the Intergenerational Event and prior to leaving for Tucson for the winter.

Joan Gibney – Coordinated the baking of bread for weekly and special services. She also recruited volunteers to take over the Sunday Coffee Hour. Thanks to Barbara Johnson and to Clarissa Youngberg for being so willing to help!

Jake Clapp, our landscaper – Donated the lovely Christmas tree to the church and put it up for us in the sanctuary.



## Please Help!

Coffee Hour servers are needed! Please see Clarissa Youngberg or contact her at [cdwylie@comcast.net](mailto:cdwylie@comcast.net) or at 203-397-2983 if you would be willing to help. Thanks!

## From the Pastor:

### Everyone is a Greeter

*Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.*

(Acts 8:38-39, 41-43)



In this snapshot of the early Christian movement, from the Book of Acts, fantastic things happen!

Things happened because **people recognized the work of the Holy Spirit**.

Things happened because **Peter realized that his world was being broken open** to include those previously excluded.

Things happened as **folks were engaged in proclamation and conversation**, received through a water-based initiation, and a commitment to "teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

I'm always flabbergasted by the number received: 3,000. That would be a problem. That would be a **good** problem.

If we dismiss the story due to the fantastic number, we miss out on our own expectation for people to become excited about participating in this Christian movement that Bethesda continues to walk in.

We would do well to **recognize the work of the Holy Spirit here**.

We would do well to **realize our world is being broken open** to include those previously excluded.

We would do well to root **ourselves deeply in proclamation and conversation**, baptismal renewal, and a commitment to our regular gatherings as God's people made new in Christ.

When you see someone you do not know, who is participating in our weekly Sunday worshipping assembly, please go out of your way to welcome. Do not worry about offending. Be who you are, someone who represents Bethesda and who wants people to connect with the church.

Think about all the "first times" in your life. I remember the first time I met with the Congregation Council. Martin Jean met me at my car, and told me not to change my clothes in the extremely hot July weather into my clerics. Richard Ford whisked my family away for pizza at Modern. I am so grateful for these acts of welcome, and pray that the face of Christ at Bethesda will continue to expect newcomers, and also to be shaped by them.

Won't it be awesome?

Pastor Tim Keyl

*Jesus, the Lord, welcomed everybody, especially the foreigner, the excluded, the sad and lonely and hurting. In fact, that got him in trouble with the religious leaders of his day more than almost anything else. So, if Jesus loved and welcomed someone, then who am I to say I'm not going to do that?*

--from the chapter "Everyone is Welcome," from *Reclaiming the "L" Word: Renewing the Church from its Lutheran Core*, by Kelly A. Fryer (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress © 2003), p 52.

## Stewardship at Bethesda

It's only February—we shouldn't have to think about stewardship again for months, right? But stewardship is about more than giving money to church, as important as that is for carrying out our ministries. It's about faithfully caring for and using *everything* that God has given us.

What has God given us? Everything we have.

So what is stewardship about? Everything we have.

In his book *Giving to God*, the biblical scholar Mark Allen Powell lists some other aspects of stewardship:

- stewardship of the earth: conserving water, recycling paper and aluminum, preserving wetlands and rainforests
- stewardship of our bodies: getting exercise, eating right, managing stress, flossing our teeth
- stewardship of our families: nurturing our relationships, raising happy and healthy children, caring for elderly parents
- stewardship of the gospel: preserving the life-giving message of what God has done through Jesus Christ and sharing that message with the world

He concludes: "Properly speaking, stewardship is about all of life, about giving ourselves to God and using all that God has given us in grateful and appropriate ways." What does this mean for Bethesda? How do we use *all* that God has given us—as individuals and as a congregation—in grateful and appropriate ways? I've volunteered to re-start the Stewardship committee to get us thinking about that question and how we might start to answer it. And I'm inviting everyone to join in.

An exploratory meeting is set for Thursday, February 17, at 7.00 p.m. There's no commitment: please come if you're interested in thinking more about what a life of stewardship would be like, if you're interested in becoming a better steward of all the blessings that God has given you, if you're interested in helping Bethesda become a better steward of all the blessings God has given us. Questions? Ask Pastor Keyl or me. We hope you'll join us on February 17.

Chris Wigren  
(203-624-2063; [cwigren@yahoo.com](mailto:cwigren@yahoo.com))



## Fair Trade Coffee and Tea

Fair Trade coffee, teas and chocolate are still available for sale. Please see Becky Lerud (or email her at

[Rebecca.lerud@att.net](mailto:Rebecca.lerud@att.net)) if you are interested in purchasing any of these items. **A special shipment of chocolate is now available in time for Valentine's Day!**

Fair Trade promotes fair wages, children's rights, women's rights, the right to organize, environmental rights and indigenous rights. A portion of the Fair Trade proceeds also goes to the Bethesda Women of the ELCA (WELCA).

## Children Youth and Families



## Congratulations, Bethesda 2011 Confirmands!

Seth Christopher Bjorkman  
Amanda Kaitlin Limauro  
Nicholas Astrup Marmor  
Jarrett Paul Watson  
Michael Paul Wimmer

Winter Hammo at Trinity Lutheran Church in Worcester was great!

Here is the Bethesda Youth Group (BYG) taking a pizza break:



## Offering Update – a new year, a renewed commitment

After passing a new, challenge budget, members are called to reflect upon the value of Bethesda in your life and consider revising your pledge or making an additional gift. Thank you.

	2010	2011	Ahead/Behind	%
As of 1/30	\$13,569	\$12,107	-\$1462	-11%
Yr End	\$158,237	\$176,000*	17,763	11%

\*Budgeted based on projections from pledges and past giving habits.

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Any and all from Bethesda, young and old, are invited to attend **Doing What Matters**, a renewal movement gathering for all Lutheran congregations in New England. The “Southern” New England Gathering will be Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at Salem Lutheran Church in Bridgeport.

A car pool will leave from Bethesda at 8:30 am.

Cost is \$15 for early registration. Contact Pastor Keyl to register, and make checks payable to *Bethesda Lutheran Church*.

At **Doing What Matters**, we will  
 Experience more “renewable” patterns of working;  
 Consider more sustainable ways of doing and being church;  
 Get tools to bring back to our congregation;  
 Contribute to a synod-wide process of developing a purpose statement and guiding principles that will lead the way.

Be who You Are...See what you Have...Do What Matters to God!

Pastor Keyl  
 pastorkeyl@snet.net  
 (203) 787-2346

Our newly formed **Communications Committee** (Clare & Chris Couture, Lars Gjerde, Doug Gray, Chloe & Ben Groth, Kari and Pastor Keyl, Greg Mandas, and Brigitte Neumann) ask for your cooperation in filling out and returning the communications survey that is in the newsletter. It is important for them to understand what our technology skills are as they look at new ways to share information with our members.

## Calling all quilters

Work will begin soon on the quilt we will be making for the Holiday Fair in November. If you would like to help out, please contact Maureen Anderson after church some Sunday or call her at 203-488-4993.

This year's quilt will be lots and lots of baskets. They will be made by machine piecing and some appliqué work - not our usual style at all! So it will be an adventure for all.

Our early sessions at church on a Saturday morning involve cutting the fabric and learning how to put the blocks together. Then most of the work is done at home and then brought back at some point to be put together with everybody else's blocks.

We appreciate help and would be eager to have you join us.

The submission deadline  
 for the next issue of  
*The Visitor* is  
 Sunday, February 13  
 Please e-mail your submissions to  
 Clare Couture, Production  
 Manager ([bethesda@snet.net](mailto:bethesda@snet.net))  
 Visit our Web page:  
[www.bethesdanewhaven.org](http://www.bethesdanewhaven.org))



## Here is the Church

### *Six-week Bible Study on the Letter to the Ephesians*

Eleven people have gathered in the Parish House Living Room on Tuesday nights from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm to consider what Eugene Peterson calls "Practicing Resurrection" as the framework from an ancient letter to the church.

We will continue to read and reflect, and build community Tuesday nights in February, meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

If you've ever wondered how the church is meant to be, this is the study for you! Bring yourselves. Bring a friend. Make new friends as we read passages like this one: *I...beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Together we are stronger! Questions? Contact Pastor Keyl at [pastorkeyl@snet.net](mailto:pastorkeyl@snet.net)

### **Wednesday Morning Bible Study:**



We have begun a series on *Great Expectations: Studies in Isaiah*. Certainly we all have expectations in one form or another throughout our lives. These visions give us hope and the desire to move into the future as we walk with God and serve one another. Dates for these sessions are **February 16, and March 2, 2011.**

You are invited to attend our bi-weekly gatherings with light food and fellowship, biblical readings, and lively discussions. Everyone is welcome. We start at 8:00 and end at 9:00 am, meeting in the Parish House living room.



Please join us on Sunday mornings following the 9:45 a.m. service for the Adult Forum. Grab a cup of coffee and join us in the Living Room for these lively and interesting discussions:

**Feb. 6-** "Will There Be Another Generation of Disciples of Jesus?" –

Pastor Jack Saarela. Yale University Campus Ministry

**Feb. 13** – Islam- Steve Judd

**Feb. 20** – Pangani Center - Carol DeVore and Paul Stuehrenberg\*\*

**Feb. 27** – Lutherans in Mission (LIM) and Resurrection Day Camp - Mike, Meg and Barbara Stark \*\*

## News from Cairo

Hello Bethesda!

I am very happy to be a member here and grateful that you have agreed to journey with me in the candidacy process. I am currently in the middle of my second year in Yale Divinity School's three-year Master of Divinity program. This semester I will participate in the divinity school's very first exchange program with Al Azhar University in Cairo. This is Al Azhar's first exchange program with a non-Muslim school, so we are looking forward to this very special opportunity. I will study Islamic Theology, Islamic Law/Ethics, Arabic, and Christian Theology in an Islamic Context. Unfortunately, because we are the guinea pigs, I don't really know much more about the upcoming semester than this but I will definitely fill you in when I return, if not sooner! I wish you all a good spring and summer and I look forward to seeing you again in the fall.

Thank You,  
Abby

*As of this publication, Abby was waiting to be evacuated out of Cairo.*

## Attention Thrivent Members!

If you are a Thrivent benefit member you may have received a letter in the mail stating you had Choice Dollars to allocate through the Thrivent Choice Program. Please consider donating your money to Bethesda Lutheran Church in New Haven. You can go on-line to Thrivent.com to allocate your dollars. You may also use the number listed below for Thrivent. There may be an additional amount listed at the close of each quarter. Based on your Thrivent products, a determination was made as to the dollar amount you would receive, if you have questions please call Thrivent at 1-800-847-4836 or contact Katie Gehner, Congregational Advocate at [kgehner@att.net](mailto:kgehner@att.net) or 203-481-9720.

Bethesda will receive an electronic deposit monthly and an email to the contact name that was submitted when the account was setup. (Clare Couture ) This email will have a list of Thrivent benefit members who donated dollars but not the dollar amounts. Please make the effort to allocate your dollars as every little amount adds up when all donate together.

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### ***Bethesda's Prayer List:***

***For Healing and strength:*** John D. Moulard, son of Carol Moulard; Donna Kelly, sister of Bill Strickland; Adele Larson, mother of Doreen Larson Oboyski; Pastor Wilfredo Martínez, former pastor of Priscilla and Anibal; Eleanor Brisson, mother of Linda Johnson and Veronica Brisson; Ed Abeling; Ray Anderson; Linda Salisbury; Betty Neal; Betty Henrickson; George Lindbeck; Robert Evenson; Aina Smith; Len DeNardis; Sylvia Dunn; Ruth Mood; Jeanette Tykson; Ruth Jacobson; Rita Wissink.

***For those serving in the military:*** including Allison Mandas, daughter of Greg & Carlen Mandas; Joshua Bender, stepbrother of Chris Lee; Kyle Bishop, son of Bill Johnson serving in the Marines; Bruce Bailey, Jr. nephew of Linda Johnson serving in the army ***and the chaplains of our churches who serve them.***

***For our partners in the Gospel:*** the congregations and schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Jordan & The Holy Land (ELCJHL); Luther House; our mission partners, Resurrection Lutheran Church in New Haven, and the Pangani Children's Centre, Nairobi, Kenya, in its ministry to those living with the impact of AIDS and hunger in Africa.

***For Bethesda:*** that God continues to guide us into the future with ministries of witness and service while building up our community in all of its diversity.

***For those preparing for ministry:*** Tracy Swan Tuite, Lorraine Peterson, Abby Ferjak, and Ben Groth.

***For Baptism:*** On January 16<sup>th</sup> we welcomed Greta Mary Lee, daughter of Chris and Nora Lee and sister of Eleanor, into our community of faith by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Greta's sponsor is Isaac Spencer, brother of Nora Lee.

***For Comfort in Grief:*** We remember the family and friends of Eric Larson, father of Doreen Larson-Oboyski, who died in the Lord on Tuesday, December 31; the family and friends of Johanne Pedersen who died in the Lord on Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup>; and the family and friends of Mildred McMann who died in the Lord on January 24<sup>th</sup>. A Memorial Service for Millie will be held on Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. We also remember the family and friends of Charles Berdahl, uncle of Becky Lerud who died in the Lord on January 25<sup>th</sup>. *Rest eternal grant them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.*



*Welcome into God's family, Greta Mary Lee!*