

Coming This Month...

July 5 Council Meeting

11-15 VBS

21 WMF Meeting

23 Vi Paulson's 100th Birthday Celebration

29 AFLC Ambassador Concert



Bethany Free Lutheran Church
451 34th St.
Astoria, OR 97103

Do you really love?

It is exciting for me to finally be here with my new church family. If any of you are wondering, I and my family have been warmly welcomed by everyone associated with the congregation. We have felt both loved and accepted by the congregation as a whole. I am honored to have received a call to serve the good people of Bethany Free Lutheran, as well as those in Astoria and the surrounding areas. As I reflected on what to write for my first article as your new pastor, I thought of something I read as my devotion a few days ago. 1st John chapter 3 verse 11 says, "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (ESV).

The concept of love is a tricky thing. The world oftentimes confuses love for acceptance. "If you really love someone, you accept them for who they are," many today exclaim. Oftentimes this is said of someone that has a same sex attraction. If you as a Christian are to love them, you need to accept them for who they are. This is actually true, though not what most people understand! We are called to accept that all people are sinners, that's who they are. Whether you have a same sex attraction, opposite sex attraction, or no attraction- you are a sinner, and in need of a savior.

What we have to be careful with is not confusing accepting someone as a sinner, versus accepting their sinful lifestyle as being normative and good. While this previous month our nation celebrated the homosexual lifestyle as being good and healthy, our nation attempted to call what God has clearly called sinful and wrong, as being pure and holy. Practicing a homosexual lifestyle is sinful and wrong. It is a practice that needs to be repented of, and turned away from. It is as equally wrong and sinful as two unmarried heterosexuals engaging in premarital sex. Both practices are wrong and sinful. It is not loving to call a practice that if unrepentant of, leads to eternal separation from God in a literal place called Hell.

Would you say that if you saw a young child wander out into a busy street and you told the child to come back where it was safe, as

unloving? Of course not. The child was engaging in risky behavior that if left unchecked would likely lead to serious injury or death. The unloving thing would be to ignore the child's behavior and accept the behavior as a free expression of the child's independence. Christians who remain silent on the issue of practicing homosexuality, or other sexual sins don't help people who struggle with those practices. The loving response of a Christian is to thoughtfully, and lovingly share how those practices are sins, and that they need to be repented of.

Those that agree with the Bible on this matter sometimes go the other direction by taking great joy and pleasure in calling out certain types of sins and sinners as being particularly bad. Instead of disagreeing with a lifestyle or practice, these people tend to elevate themselves to being better than others who have obvious outward sins. The Pharisees were known for this practice. They seemed to love to remind others of their sins, while ignoring the sins that they struggled with.

So, what is it that we are supposed to do? We are to be firm on God's Word. If God calls something sinful and wrong, then we must do the same. But as we do that, we don't need to rub that sin in someone's face. We ought to demonstrate love to them, by being honest with them, but not in gentleness and love. A balance must be struck between honest truth and tactful help.

Today some take to social media to be great "online" warriors. They call people out and leave behind a trail of carnage and destruction. The more people they upset, the better. While proclaiming the truth may offend and upset people, that should never be our goal. Remember, we are trying to plant seeds in their heart that will lead them to repentance and faith. Winning the argument is not nearly as important as having them turn from their sins and place their faith in Jesus Christ. So when you read or hear about love, seek to demonstrate love steeped in God's truth, and applied with plenty of God's grace.

Pastor Rich

Worship With Us

8:45 A.M. Glad Tidings Radio 1370 A.M.

9:40 A.M. Adult/ Youth Sunday School (all ages welcome)

11:00 a.m. Worship Services

Live Stream

We also live stream our 11:00 a.m. Sunday worship services on Facebook Live. Links can be found on our website: bethanyfree.com

Sermons can also be found on our YouTube

Bethany Free Lutheran, Astoria, Oregon

<https://youtu.be/1g8nRHBr76Q>

Men's Breakfast

Men's breakfast and prayer will be July 2nd at 8:00 A.M. at the church.

If you would like to help with cooking that will start at 7:15 A.M.

Men's breakfast will be the 1st Saturday of each month.



Church Council Meeting

Board of Deacons and Trustees will be meeting Tuesday July 5th, at 6:00 P.M.

WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation (WMF)

Thursday July 21st, at 11:00 A.M. Everyone is asked to bring a sack lunch. Dessert provided by Beth Hanley and Bible study lead by Georgia Maincovich, all ladies are welcome.

Brown Bag Ministry

Every Tuesday at 1:30 P.M. Each week our Brown Bag Ministry prepares as many as 100 or more brown bag lunches that are distributed to the homeless by local nonprofits and individuals. Each lunch is created to feed the body and share the good news of God's love and salvation through Jesus. Join us in packing the bags.

Vacation Bible School

July 11-15, ages 5yrs-12yrs, 10:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. lead by the Joshua team from the Association Bible College. BBQ and activities Friday at 5:30 P.M. for the whole family.

G'day, mate! Get ready for the trip of a lifetime as we zoom off to the the Land Down Under! Like a boomerang, we are returning kids to what the Bible says about the value of life. We'll discover how precious each and every one of us is to God. From the tiniest to the oldest, each person is made in the image God, wonderfully designed to know him and to live for him! Out of his great love, God offers us eternal life through faith in his son, Jesus. Grab your tickets and your sunnies and get ready for fun in the sun at Zoomerang!



Happy 100th Birthday

Vi Paulson's 100 birthday celebration will be at The Loft at The Red Building July 23 at 1:00 P.M. Come help her celebrate!!

Ambassador Concert

AFLC Ambassador's concert will be at church Friday July 29, at 7:00 P.M. The 2022 Ambassador Team is made up of 5 students from the Free Lutheran Bible College. The team is committed to proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ through musical concerts and through testimony of what God has done in their lives.

We are in need of housing and meals for 3 ladies and 2 men (this could be 2 homes or 1). They will need housing for July 28 & 29th. The 2 ladies have gluten allergies so will need gluten free meals.

Contact Pastor Rich @971.988.9886