

Coming This Month...

JANUARY—

6 Deacons & Trustees Meet

7 Men's Prayer Breakfast

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

The Return Ship Home

As we enter into another year, I find myself reflecting on the recent losses some in our congregation have experienced. As a pastor I am often involved with many grieving families and individuals. At times it can honestly be a bit overwhelming. Yet in spite of the pain of loss so many of us experience, there is an allegory about death I heard that has helped me immensely.

One of my favorite books of all time (especially as a young boy) is *The Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann David Wyss. I downloaded the audio book a little while ago to listen to the book that brought me so much pleasure as a child. I was able to find the unabridged book and was astonished at how overtly Christian of a book it is. I don't remember thinking the same way about the abridged book I read as a child. In the book, the father tells his children and wife an allegorical story to help them better understand God's involvement with humanity.

In the story the father shared how there is a great king. This king was lord of the kingdom of light and reality. He had subjects sent to a desert island, and were given the task to cultivate and develop this land. The subjects were given all they needed to be successful at this task. The king from time to time would send ships to bring away some of the colonists of the island and either reward them or punish them with how they lived their lives.

The ships sent to retrieve the colonists were called different names like sickness and death, yet they were all controlled by the admiral. When the ships arrived, the admiral would point out people that were to be taken aboard to return to the king. The fleet always arrived unexpectedly, and normally they were

unwelcomed. When the fleet returned to the kingdom of light and reality the king judged the subjects and either sent them to work in the mines forever, or allowed them to live and work in peace in the land of light.

As I listened to this allegory I was reminded that while it is a hard thing for people to be taken from us in death, it truly is just a matter of God bringing back his subjects to be with Him in heaven. The Bible records for us that as children of God (those who have faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord), we are given the promise that when we are absent from this body, we are present with the Lord. As such, death experienced by a believer is never a time of sorrow, but a time of great joy. For death is nothing but a ship delivering us to our new home. Death takes our friends, family, and loved ones from us which is hard, yet in our parting of ways we are reminded that before long we will be reunited with each other in the presence of God in the kingdom of Light and Reality.

As we continue our lives, the ships of death will come and visit our friends and family, and eventually us. The ships will always arrive unexpectedly, yet they will arrive. Let us not be overwhelmed with the sorrow of not seeing our loved ones anymore when they board those ships. Rather, let us look to our loved ones who have boarded the ships of death with faith in Jesus as simply going on a trip ahead of us. Through faith in Jesus, we too will be reunited with our loved ones when the King sends the ships of death to pick us up and transport us to the Kingdom of Light and Reality.

Pastor Rich Carr

Worship With Us

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

9:30 A.M. Sunday School (all ages welcome)

11:00 a.m. Worship Services

Live Stream

We live stream our 11:00 a.m. Sunday worship services on Facebook Live (Bethany Free Lutheran Church) Links can be found on our website: bethanyfree.com. Sermons after can be found on our YouTube -Bethany Free Lutheran, Astoria, Oregon

Men's Breakfast

Men's breakfast and prayer will be January 7th at 8:00 A.M. at the church. Cooking starts around 7:15 A.M. if you would like to help.

Church Council Meeting

Board of Deacons and Trustees will meet for a partial budget meeting Tuesday, January 10th at 6:00 P.M.

WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation (WMF)

Thursday January 12th, at 11:00 A.M. Bring a sack lunch, dessert is provided. All Ladies welcome!



Bethany Sewing Ministry

Sewing will be January 19th and 26th, at 10:00 A.M. All sewing skills are welcome. A lunch is provided.

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.

Praise & Worship Band

We are looking to form a praise and worship band. We are looking for anyone who can play and instrument or sing contemporary worship songs to contact Pastor Rich Carr 971-988-9886. A rehearsal time will be announced once a few people are interested.

A **Big Thank You** to everyone that came and helped decorate the church. It looked lovely.

Thank you ❤️

Thank you for the amazing Christmas Breakfast and a special thanks to the people that setup, provided food, and cleaned up.


Thank you to all who came caroling , we had a large group and ended the evening with great fun and fellowship at Eric's house. Thank you Eric!

Thank you also to Laura Brown for the memorial tree it was a nice addition .


Newsletter

If you want to make any changes to how you receive your newsletter just let us know.

There are 3 ways to access our newsletter.

 Online at our website www.bethanyfree.com

By email 

 Printed and mailed.

Just let us know what you prefer.

503-325-2925

bethanyafc@gmail.com

Church Directory

A picture church directory is being put together. If you have not had your picture taken by Mickey Cereghino at church and would like to send a picture in please email to bethanyafc@gmail.com