

Coming This Month...

MAY -

5 Pie Social FLY Fundraiser

14 Mother's Day

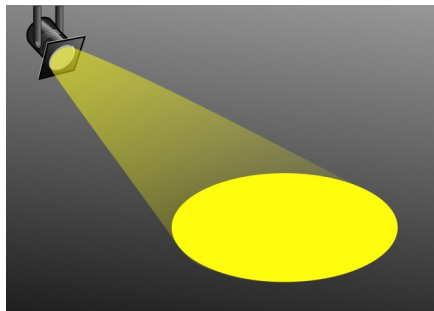
28 Graduation Recognition



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

Ministry Spotlight

Living God's Word and Sharing God's Love



The Brown Bag Ministry at Bethany Free Lutheran Church began about 10 years ago during a church meeting about ministries. Bev Jackson Shumaker felt that God placed this on her heart as a need that should be addressed.

Bev has been called by God throughout her life to be involved with ministries, such as, church clothing drives, Native American outreach, and local food banks. The last forty years Bev has worked in sharing God's love through ministries such as these.

The Brown Bag Ministry meets at the church every Tuesday at 1:30 PM. Bev does all the shopping for this ministry and she is always on the look out for bargains to make the funds go further, however, the increasing costs of food this past year has made this more challenging. She says that everyone involved with packing lunches has a good time with fellowship while working and visiting after the work is completed. The group takes time to pray over the packed lunches and those that will be receiving them, they truly hope that these are blessings to the people that need lunches and that through this ministry those receiving will come to know Jesus. Some of the congregation that participates with this ministry are Nancy, Jan, Bruce, Evelyn,



Kitty, Georgia, Berit, Patty, Pastor Carr, Brenda, Naomi, Mary, and Jon. *(the author is solely responsible for any names unintentionally left off this list)*

Each week about 10 people gather to pack 180-240 bag lunches, that can include applesauce, pudding, cookies, chips, crackers, protein packs, utensils, hand wipes, all to feed the physical needs of people. To feed the spiritual needs a sticker that says "Jesus Loves You!", a page from "The Daily Bread", a church business card and a reminder that this is "Given in the love of Jesus". Bev is passionate that hungry people are not able to hear about Jesus and his message until their physical needs are first addressed.

These brown bags are distributed weekly to The Astoria Rescue Mission (40 sacks), who's "mission is to help underserved populations with housing and getting back on their feet, while proclaiming God's love for all people". (www.astoriarescuemission.com) The Helping Hands Re-Entry Program in both Astoria and Seaside each receive 100 sacks. The mission of this organization "is to provide a helping hand to a sustainable life through resources, recovery, and reentry". (www.helpinghandsreentry.org) Bev also has expanded to collecting specific clothing items as well to give to these organizations. She donates new socks, gloves, underwear, hats, and hand warmers. She includes a sticker with John 3:16 on the hand warmers.



Bev's passion and message for all of us is that people in need are someone's mother, father, daughter, or son. She hopes that she can be an answer to someone's prayer by providing nourishment for the body and soul, friendship, and human touch to these people. She values their friendship as well, and has even received phone calls during the holidays from people she has previously assisted who are no longer in our area. Human touch and interaction is vital to all of us, no matter our circumstances in life. Bev asks that we pray for this ministry and that God will touch the hearts of the people who receive the brown bags or clothing items. Bev is moved by the lyrics of the beautiful song by Ray Botlz, "Thank You For Giving To The Lord".

(<https://youtu.be/962RR-IEcOU>)

She also requested the following verses be included in this article, **Matthew 25:34-40:**

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"



Here are some local statistics and information to emphasize the importance and need for this ministry:



- In 2022 there were 529 Clatsop County residents that were homeless, this did not include those that may be couch surfing with family or friends.
- Clatsop County has the highest percentage of homeless people in the total population of any county in Oregon.
- More than 25% of the residents in Clatsop County qualify for emergency food assistance, 41% of these are children and 20% are seniors.
- In November of 2021 the following reasons were cited for homelessness in Oregon: Mental illness 61%, Substance Abuse 58%, and Lack of affordable housing 54%.

There are many ways to be involved and support this ministry:

- Reach out to someone already involved if you have questions.
- Just show up on Tuesdays, there is a job for everyone!
- Offerings/donations can be made to specifically contribute funds for this ministry.
- Donate socks, gloves, hats, underwear, and hand warmers.
- Pray that God will touch the lives and hearts of the people receiving these gifts.

Knowing history helps us to move forward

As I write this article, I realize that I have only two more weeks left of preaching through *The Story*. *In fact when this is published, there will likely be only one week left, or possibly it will be over! I am sure that some are probably looking forward to being finished with this study. No matter how good something is, there is normally great pleasure in completing a task. To ready, study, and listen to sermons from a Biblical overview for 31 weeks is no small task. As I reflect on the near completion of this series, I hope that those who have taken part on this journey have grown in their Biblical knowledge, and more importantly, grown in their relationship with the Lord. In seminary we are told that as we prepare our messages during the week, we in essence preach to ourselves. This means that the encouragement I offer to you in the congregation on Sunday morning, I gave myself earlier in the week. This also means that the admonishment and warnings I give on Sunday to you, I first preached to myself. While I am a seminary trained, and ordained pastor, I am really not any different than the congregation in many ways. I am a sinner in need of God's grace and mercy.*

One of my struggles I have fought with over the past 20 years or so of ministry is becoming overwhelmed and despondent at the state of our culture. There are times when I feel overwhelmed by the corruption and just plain evil that our once great country now seems to revel in. While I am not a news "junkie" I do try to stay current on events and happenings, and sometimes it seems like the more I hear and see of what's going on around me, the more I become overwhelmed which can quickly lead to my becoming despondent and hopeless for our future.

Perhaps you are like me. Maybe you find yourself sometimes overwhelmed by the sinfulness of our society, especially of our elected leaders. One of the best ways I have found to help myself when I start to slip into despair or hopelessness is to remember how God still cared for the nation of Israel, and later Judah even though they often had poor leadership, and were by in large hardened in their sins. Looking backwards in world history (particularly the history of the Jews) has greatly helped bring me comfort and peace for our country's future.

Think to the sinful world of Noah. The entire world seemed to be in rebellion to God. While yes God punished the world, He saved Noah and his family. Not only did God save them physically from the flood, but God saved them from the sinful culture

that surrounded them. In time God called one man to leave his people and country behind and begin again. Abram took his wife, and nephew Lot with him and with God's help he started over again. In time the nation grew in number, but became enslaved. Not just enslaved physically, but enslaved spiritually. The very people God had called to be set apart from the world became like the world and worshipped and served the gods of the Egyptians.

In time the nation of Israel occupied the promised land, and life was good, at first! But the people grew in their sinful rejection of God again, and needed to be reminded over and over that they were to worship and serve only Him. Through a series of judges, the people would be delivered from their physical oppressors, till their hearts grew cold again, and the cycle would repeat. In time kings would come and go. Some kings were good, most were not. In time the kings of Israel, and then Judah would cease and there was a dark time in the Jews history.

All the nation of Judah had left to hope for was the promised Messiah, the Christ. As you know the Messiah came, and then went. Jesus made the final payment for our sins, and provided a permanent solution to our world's sin problem. Now we as the church are called to prepare the world for His return. We are to go out and make disciples. That is the mission of the church.

While this happens we are promised that we will be hated, persecuted, and some will even lose their life for this noble calling. Our kingdom is not in this world. While we are Americans, we are foreigners living in a foreign land. No matter who is in power, or what horrible laws are passed, we are called to be the salt and light our country desperately needs. And when the battles comes (some figurative and some will be physical) we serve a risen Lord who will fight for us. And as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego proclaimed God has the power to save and deliver us (like He did for them). But if He chooses not to, then we will not turn away from the truth. For as the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:23, it is better to depart this life and be with Christ. So either way we as Christ followers win! *As The Story concludes remember the lessons you have learned, and apply them to your life. Don't grow hopeless or despondent, push forward and onward to they upper calling we have in Christ.*

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 will be May 6th, 8:00 A.M. at the church. Cooking starts around 7:15 A.M. if you would like to help.

WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) Thursday May 11th, 11:00 A.M. Bring a sack lunch, dessert is provided. All Ladies welcome!

WMF DAY 2023

Rescued and Redeemed

Colossians 1:13-14

WMF day is being held in Sioux Falls, SD, June 14th. For more info www.aflc.org/women

Bethany Sewing Ministry

Sewing will be May 4th, 18th & 25th, 10:00 A.M. All sewing skills are welcome. A lunch is provided.

Brown Bag Ministry

Every Tuesday, 1:30 P.M. Each week our Brown Bag Ministry prepares as many as 100 or more brown bag lunches that are distributed.

Deacons & Trustees Meeting

D&T meeting will be Tuesday May, 6:00 P.M.

The Net in Naknek, Alaska

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our Naknek tote. We appreciate the generous giving of supplies and funds to fill it. A special thanks to Laura and Jon Brown who took it to Seattle, Andy Peitsch for securing a place on the barge, the ladies for sewing all the quilts and all who helped load it on Sunday.



Free Lutheran Youth Conference Fundraisers:

A group will be going to the FLY Conference in Estes Park July 3-8, 2023. They are working on raising funds and have a few planned.

Please contact Mickey or Angie Cereghino or Pastor Carr for more details. And please tell neighbors and friends!

Pie Social FLY Fundraiser: At 6:30pm on May 5th, we will be holding a Pie Social & Silent auction to raise funds for the Free Lutheran Youth Conference (FLY). You are all invited to come and join us for delicious desserts or to bake a dessert for a donation...or both!

"Rent-A-Kid:" If there are jobs around your house or property that you would like to hire one of our Youth to help with, we would be happy to help! Jobs may include yard work, stacking firewood, cleaning around the house, or anything that you may need help with.

Firewood Delivery: Trailer loads of firewood are available from our Youth. The cost is \$150 for a delivered and stacked trailer load (over 1/2 cord).

Vacation Bible School

Twists & Turns, Following Jesus Changes the Game Psalms 25:4

June 19-23, 9 am-12pm.

Family Fun Night, Friday 6-8:30pm dinner & carnival games.

More info to come.

Thanks

A special thanks to the ladies who put on the Ladies Tea last week. It was so wonderful to see so many ladies, girls and generational families.

