

Coming This Month...

January

8 Deacon's & Trustees

25 Annual Dinner & Meeting

28 Prayer & Praise Service

2024

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

If you are reading this article then you likely view the function and work of the church as an important aspect of your life. But the real question is, how do you fit into the church? What should your role be in the daily work and ministry of the church? Is church meant to be a place that you go to on Sundays for a couple hours, or is church something more? Is it possible that you have maybe even fallen into a negative and harmful attitude concerning the church? In a book written by Tom S. Rainer called, *Who Moved My Pulpit? Leading Change in the Church*, Rainer talks about 5 different harmful attitudes people often have in churches that make change difficult or impossible.

“The Deniers” are those who refuse to see things for how they are. Rainer shared how he was consulting for a church whose average attendance fell from 350 to 180 over a period of 5 years. When he spoke to a member about this, she said his data was wrong. When asked if she noticed the church pews less filled, she said no. Even when he pointed out all the evidence he gathered, she still denied there was a problem. Rainer says of these people, “The denier is one of the most difficult to lead in change because he or she does not think anything needs changing.”

Then there are the “the Entitled.” These are the people who view the church like a country club. You pay your dues, and as such you expect certain perks, services, and privileges. This person expects their color of carpet, her temperature inside the building, and their pastor to jump when they call. This person cares less about reaching others, and more about their comfort, desires, and perks. “Entitled” church goers tend to embody the ideal of American consumerism and care little about true outreach to others because sometimes that requires change on their part, and they don’t want to change.

The third group of people are the “Blamers.” The church isn’t growing because it’s the council’s fault, or more often than not, the pastor. Sometimes the blame falls on the ungodly. If only we lived 50 years ago, the people were better then. The state or the country we live in is to blame. As long as the blame isn’t focused inward, then these people feel content. Change and repentance doesn’t need to happen because it isn’t their fault.

The 4th group are similar to the “Blamers”, but worse. They are the “Critics.” These people drain the energy of those who they blame. Like the “Blamers” the fault of the church lies with others, but they want people to be aware of their feelings. More often than not pastors and church leaders are on the receiving end of a “critic’s” rant. They constantly either directly complain to the leader, or even worse gossip about the problem and sometimes take to social media to let their feelings be known. While the Bible lays out constructive ways to deal with conflict, they ignore what the Bible says, and do what feels best.

The last negative group of church goers are the “Confused.” Rainer believes these people are often well intentioned, but (as the name points out) confused. His example is conflict over a new pulpit. A confused church goer resists changing the pulpit because they see it as a sacred violation. Instead of viewing the Word of God being taught as sacred, they see the furniture used to do this as sacred. Some traditions and things are tightly held because tradition and things provide comfort and security. The “Confused” would resist changing the order of service, or an aspect of how something is done regardless of the reason because that would mean there would be a violation of what has always been done which in and of itself is sacred.

As we move into the new year as a congregation, it is important to always be open to change no matter how hard it is. Our culture is rapidly changing around us, and this sometimes calls for us to change our methods of reaching out, as well as how we do things. While there are some things that should never change, occasionally it can be good and healthy to take a good hard look at how we do things and be willing to try new things on occasion. It may fail, but that’s ok. Let’s learn from our mistakes, and continue to grow together as a family.

Pastor Rich Carr

Worship With Us

8:45 A.M. Glad Tidings Radio 1370 A.M.
9:30 A.M. Sunday School
11:00 A.M. Worship Services

New Live Stream

The new livestream Subsplash app is now up and running. We live stream our 11:00 A.M. Sunday worship services on Subsplash. With the Holiday season upon us now we are also live streaming the Wednesday Advent Services, and both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day service. You can download the Subsplash app.. Not only does it give you just the current service but you can find the full library of past services that have been live streamed and search a particular service based on the topic of the sermon. The app also has a weekly Bible reading amongst other things. This is a great app for a cellphone which allows you to quickly connect but you are also able to chat and message in it. If you still prefer Facebook we are still there on our page but with the issues that Facebook has given us it was time to move away from them as a primary app. Sunday sermons are also posted on the same day on our YouTube channel. You can find links to all of these on our website at www.bethanyfree.com



Men's Prayer Breakfast

Will be January 6, 8:00 A.M. Cooking starts around 7:15 A.M. if you would like to help. We would love to have more men join us.

Deacons & Trustees Meeting

Monday January 8, 5:30 P.M

WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation will be meeting January 11, at 11 A.M. All Ladies Welcome!



Bethany Sewing Ministry



January 4, 18 & 25 at 10:00 A.M. All sewing skills are welcome. A lunch is provided. We work on quits that mostly are sent to the AFLC Alaska Missions in Naknek, AK

Brown Bag Ministry

Every Tuesday, 1:30 P.M. Weekly our Brown Bag Ministry prepares as many as 300 or more brown bag lunches that are distributed in the community, we are always grateful for any volunteers.



Prayer & Praise Band

The first Contemporary Prayer & Praise Service will be the evening of January 28th at 7pm. The group has been meeting Sunday evenings at 7pm to practice. They can always use singers and people who play musical instruments.



Youth Fundraiser

The youth is collecting old candles to make Firestarter's with and then sell at a later date. If you have any old ones laying around they would love to take them off your hands.


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 by calling or emailing 503-325-2925, bethanyafcl@gmail.com*

Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held Thursday evening January 25 with a dinner that will be provided at 6 P.M. followed by the meeting at 7 P.M.

Up Coming in February & March

Ash Wednesday is February 14th, we will be starting our Wednesday evening bread & soup dinners for Lent. You will soon find a sign up sheet at church on the bulletin board to provide bread & soup. Dates will be February 14, 21, 28, March 6, 13 & 20th.