

BETHESDA LUTHERAN

# NEWSLETTER

April 2025

Volume 25 | Number 4

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

By Pastor Grant Vanderford

*"Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them." --Luke 24:8-11*

Sometimes good news seems too good to be true. We think it an "idle tale," wondering how - after the struggle, the pain, the heartache - the outcome could possibly be true.

The EF5 tornado didn't damage any homes as it ripped through the city. The angry Red River didn't seep through the sandbag and clay dikes. The cancer was removed with no complications.

*Weekly*  
AT BETHESDA

MONDAYS AT 10 A.M.  
**LECTIONARY BIBLE  
STUDY**

THIRD TUESDAY OF THE  
MONTH AT 9:30 A.M.  
**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

WEDNESDAYS AT 9 A.M.  
**QUILTING**

WEDNESDAYS AT 7 P.M.  
**CHOIR REHEARSAL**

We live in a world where, more often than not, the news of the day is grim. Some national news syndicates even create a special, short segment at the end of their nightly broadcast dedicated to “positive” stories.

The story of Jesus’ resurrection, as told to the apostles by the women who went to continue grieving and preparing his body for burial, seemed to be such kind of news. Too good to be true. So much so that the apostles accused them of telling “an idle tale.”

What kind of horrid April Fools’ joke would that have been?

But these women, first witnesses to the upside-down new reality that Christ’s death and resurrection made real, had more than any idle tale to relay. They had the life-

changing, death-shattering news of God’s reign of life coming into being!

And we, too, inherit their Good News: Jesus is risen! He is not dead! And that means that death’s strong grip on our lives doesn’t get the last word.

So, on Easter, we gather to proclaim loudly that “Christ is risen – he is risen, indeed” in the face of all the bad news we encounter in our lives.

I invite you to join our family of faith for the remainder of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. There are lots of ways to connect in worship, service, learning, and fellowship. And as we gather - we, too, like the women - will be empowered to go and tell the story of God’s grand reversal – life out of death.

*Pastor Janet*



A new paschal candle has been custom created over the past couple of weeks with help from many congregation members. Check it out in the sanctuary!



Some of the kiddos also designed their own candles. They’re on display on the bulletin board across from the kitchen!





## Wednesday Lenten Meals





# LENDING A HAND

You've heard the name Billi Jo Townsend in our recent Sunday prayers, and seen her name at the back of our monthly newsletter for years. Billi is Bethesda's accountant!

In December 2024, Billi was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of cancer called, "rhabdomyosarcoma." She's had surgery, and is on a weekly treatment plan.



*Billi with her two children, Khloe and Noah*

To Billi

Billi's diagnosis has created an unexpected financial challenge for her family - if you feel inclined, gifts may be given at the following online address:

[give.lendahandup.org/fundraisers/billi-olson](https://give.lendahandup.org/fundraisers/billi-olson)

Please continue to keep Billi, her children, and entire family in your prayers.

We are grateful for all the work she's done for us at Bethesda, and hold her, Khloe, Noah, and the rest of their family in our hearts and prayers during this time.

Bethesda's  
**NEWEST  
OUTREACH MINISTRY!**

**SUNDAY, MAY 4  
COFFEE HOUR | FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

**YW**  
youthworks

Hear from member  
Matthew Benson-Tuff,  
who is the Homeless Programs Manager  
at Youthworks, about how Bethesda  
can get involved!



# SUPPORTING YOUTHWORKS: A NEW INITIATIVE

*By Marty Ohren and Joel Westby*

The outreach committee is excited to introduce a new initiative to support Youthworks, an organization that serves homeless, runaway, trafficked and at-risk youth throughout North Dakota and also at their new location in Moorhead.

Youthworks assists children and adolescents facing food insecurity and lacking basic household needs by providing essential items such as paper products, feminine care items, and other everyday necessities.

To contribute, Bethesda will have a display in the church entryway, where members

can easily drop off donations. Current requests are listed below!

Thinking ahead to this fall, it's always helpful to have extra hats, gloves, winter coats, and hand warmers - so keep those in mind, too.

Matthew Benson-Tuff, Homeless Programs Manager at Youthworks, will be sharing more information about their programming at an open forum on Sunday, May 4.

If anyone is interested and has ideas for the outreach committee, you're welcome to join the group or pass along your insight. Thank you for your generosity and support!

## DONATIONS NEEDED

- toothbrushes and toothpaste
- shampoo and conditioner
- body wash
- deodorant
- pads and tampons
- hand soap
- dish soap
- can openers
- toilet paper
- paper towels
- foods that are easy to make, such as ramen noodles, macaroni and cheese, fruit cups, or anything canned with easy-to-open tops that don't require a can opener

*benefits youth in  
our community!*





# LIGHTING FOR DOWN HOME

By Becky Erickson

Reflecting on the past, Bethesda has been involved in a number of outreach ministries. We've collected items for Lutheran World Relief - hygiene kits and the backpack project; the quilters have made numerous blankets as well as little dresses from pillowcases; we've supported blood drives, food pantries, Churches United meals, and more. Because we know we're capable - the Outreach Committee has decided to add a couple of new projects to our mission.

The first project is for Youthworks, as Marty's article just explained.

The second project will be for Down Home, which is a local organization that "empowers lives and stabilizes those emerging from homelessness by furnishing homes [and] strengthening connections..."

In 2024, 38 families were served by over 450 volunteers in our community through the work of Down Home. (This included over 7,000 pieces of donated furniture that helped turn empty apartments into welcoming spaces!)

Another of their biggest needs is lamps! If you have ever lived in an apartment, you will recall that there is often no overhead lighting. Can you imagine having only one lamp, and having to move it from room to room?!

This is a need that we can fill. Bethesda's Outreach Committee would like to introduce a "Be the Light" lamp drive.

Down Home supplies 6-8 lamps for each home they furnish, equalling about 250-300 each year! Check out the details below about donations for this project. Together, we can truly "Be the Light."

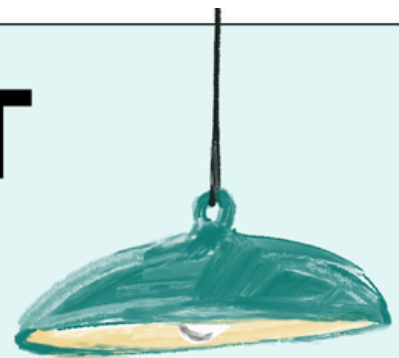
## BE THE LIGHT LAMP DRIVE



Bethesda is taking lamp donations with the following details:

- Suitable for living rooms or bedrooms
- New or gently used
- Light bulbs too!
- Bring to church between Sunday, April 27 and Sunday, May 25

Thanks to Becky Erickson for volunteering to store everything in her garage during the collection period!





# LIFELONG LEARNING

*By Twila Nicholson*

So many of us went through Sunday School or some form of religious education when we were younger. I know my love of this time as a kid certainly spurred me to join this Lifelong Learning Ministry at Bethesda... A reminder that everyone is welcome to join us as we work to provide good religious community to our youth!

Our children learn by listening to and watching others. When you see our youth at Bethesda, I invite you to take a moment and ask them about their favorite Bible story and tell them about your favorite. We don't need to be "official" religious teachers - we need to care about our youth and be willing to share our time with them.

Our educational adult forums will be taking a summer break, but will resume in the fall.

On May 4, I do invite you to grab your coffee and a cookie, and follow the crowd to learn more about youth homelessness in our area and other programming from Youthworks, led by Matthew Benson-Tuff.

Please watch for summer Vacation Bible School plans - we count on all of you to make this program a success! Even when it's a small group of kiddos, they thoroughly enjoy being at church together and learning in these unique ways.

Other topics in the planning stages include a book review about our Moorhead Detention Center, along with opportunities to learn about other religions in our community.

If there are any other ideas you would like to see, please feel free to share!





# SEEKING CUSTODIAL ASSISTANCE

We are currently looking for people to fill our custodial role for Bethesda and Bethesda All Stars over the next several weeks while our current custodian is on medical leave.

Much of the time is already covered, but we would like to have some back-ups available to fill in as needed.

The pay is \$20/hour, and the hours are flexible. (The time commitment is daily in

the early morning or evening, and once on weekends.)

It is not hard work, but it is very important as the building needs to be prepared each day for our daycare kiddos and for any church activities - and cleaned up after both!

If you're willing to be added to the on-call e-mail list, and to receive a collective message when there is a need, please let Nancy or Olivia know.



## Bethesda Bells:

Meet, Greet, & Ring  
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday, April 27  
11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the sanctuary

rehearsals will be held  
Wednesdays from 6-7 p.m.  
April 30 through May 28

## Easter Breakfast

Join us Sunday, April 20  
for breakfast before church!

Parish Life will be providing rolls from  
Classic Cakes and Catering,  
high promise to be delicious!

Join for food, fellowship, & celebration.  
The Lord is (going to be) Risen!

A free will offering will be collected.

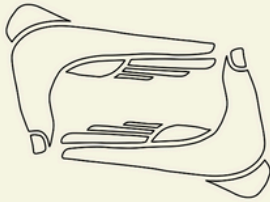
All are welcome to celebrate  
the new beginning for each  
and every one of us that Easter brings.





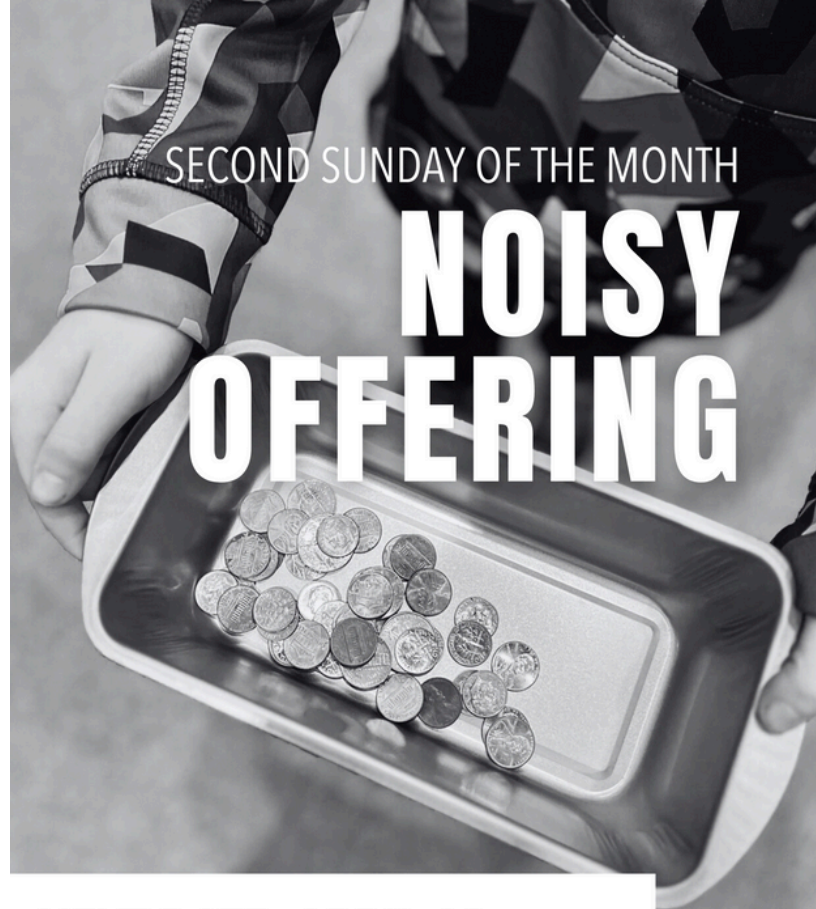
# Palm & Passion Sunday

April 13 | 9:30 a.m.



SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

# NOISY OFFERING



NEXT DATE: APRIL 13

## BLOOD DRIVE *at Bethesda*



### THURSDAY, APRIL 17

2:30 - 6:15 P.M. BLOOD DONATIONS

5:30 P.M. LENTEN MEAL

6:30 P.M. MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP

**SIGN UP >**



OR FIND THE LINK AT [BETHESDAMHD.ORG/EVENTS](https://bethesdamhd.org/events)

APRIL 2025

## HOLY WEEK



APRIL 17  
MEAL (BAKED ZITI) | 5:30 P.M.  
WORSHIP | 6:30 P.M.

**Maundy  
Thurs  
day**

APRIL 18 | 6:30 P.M.

**Good  
Friday**

APRIL 19 | 7:00 P.M.

**Holy  
Saturday**

APRIL 20 | 9:30 A.M.

**Easter  
Sunday**





## Worship







**pillowcase dresses project**



**Music by the Concordia Chapel Choir**







## Fall Preschool Openings!

4 Star Parent Aware Rated

- EXPERIENCED TEACHERS
- SMALL CLASS SIZE
- WEEKLY MUSIC PROGRAM
- EXPANSIVE OUTDOOR PLAYSPACE
- FULL DAY OR MORNING SCHOOL YEAR OPTIONS

Call today!



### CONTACT US:

Bethesda Lutheran Church  
401 40th Ave. South, Moorhead

Phone: 701-212-6637

Email:

[kari.penas@bethesdaallstars.com](mailto:kari.penas@bethesdaallstars.com)



### REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be 3 years old
- Must be potty trained



## CHURCH STAFF

Pr. Grant Vanderford  
Olivia Kelly  
Tyler Pyle  
Sam Sadlowsky  
Tammy Costin  
Billi Jo Townsend

Pastor  
Administrative Assistant  
Pianist  
Choir Director  
Health Ministry  
Financials

## OFFICERS

Kelli Anderson  
Aaron Wenaas  
Drew Robinson  
Nancy Lund

President  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer

## CONTACT

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