



Bethany Briefs

Advent Edition 2022

Bethany Presbyterian Church

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Awake to the **ASTONISHING**

by Pastor Doug Kelly, Head of Staff

Keep awake... be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. (Matthew 24:42,44)

The gospel reading for the first Sunday of Advent is always what some Bible students call the “little apocalypse.” Whether in Mark, Luke, or this year Matthew, Jesus is trying to do what the books of Daniel and Revelation try to do: strengthen people’s faith in difficult times by dramatizing the hope that God will indeed come to make things right. Apocalyptic narratives seem like doom and gloom to some of us, but they are given not for fright but for instilling courage and resilience. They are designed to “reveal” (*apocalypse* in Greek), to pull the stage curtain back to reveal the larger pieces of God’s drama of redemption.

Jesus has been asked by his disciples concerning the Son’s glorious return, and Jesus then addresses two pressing concerns: 1) When will these things take place? and 2) What are we to do in the meantime?

To the first question, Jesus makes it clear that no one knows when these things will occur, not even the Son. It always amazes me how dissatisfied some people are with this uncertainty, and feel the need to map out Jesus’ second coming with their prognostications.

To the second question – “What are we to do in the meantime?” – Jesus shares three parables about the faithful servant, the wise and foolish virgins, and the talents. The messages can’t be missed: stick to your post; bring oil for your lamp, that is, be ready for the long haul of faith; and invest in the kingdom now by

using your gifts.

That’s not bad advice when you’re waiting for Christ’s advent. And to that, Jesus adds one more thing that may be the most important for us this Advent: stay awake. “*Be vigilant, you have no idea when the Son of Man is going to show up*” (The MESSAGE).

How will you stay awake to the astonishing, surprising ways that Jesus is showing up in our world? Let me offer a few practices:

- Make it a point to come to worship every Sunday of Advent. If you cannot make it in person, attend online. Let the body of Christ help you keep alert.
- Take advantage of the Advent devotionals Bethany provides. We have hard copy scriptural meditations from Frontier Ministries, as well as our three times a week email devotional. The scriptures have a way of keeping us awake.
- Invite a friend to Christmas Eve worship at one of our four services. Our non-church-attending friends are more open to this service than any other, and God does unique things on this candlelit night. Give a friend a space for staying open to the remarkable.
- Volunteer with Wednesday Night Dinner and see the astounding before your eyes.

Christ will show up this season, not only in the manger, but in his Reign. Will you be ready to receive him when he shows up in astonishing ways?



Advent Calendar of Events

Join us as we prepare our hearts and anticipate the coming of Christmas together! The following are ways to stay connected, serve, and celebrate during this Advent season.

Family Advent Gathering

Saturday, December 3rd, from 2:00 - 4:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Come indoors to the Fellowship Hall to revel in community, treats, activities for all ages, and Christmas cheer! This is a great opportunity to meet and spend time with other Bethany families while kids prepare for Advent with crafts, decorations, and stories. Hope to see you there.

Advent Reception

Sunday, December 11th, after both services, Fellowship Hall

Congregants are invited to contribute "sweet and savory" treats from your family's Christmas traditions to our annual celebration - baked goods, crackers & cheese, fruit, gluten free options... be creative! Store-purchased items are fine. Contact Julie Christensen to let her know you're planning to bring something and/or volunteer to help: jfchristen56@hotmail.com. You can also sign up using our online form [here](#).

A Caroling We Go!

Sunday, December 11th at 1:00pm, meet in Fellowship Hall

The Queen Anne Outreach team invites you to share some Christmas cheer! We'll meet in the Fellowship Hall at 1:00pm on Sunday, December 11th (after the second service Advent reception) and walk over together to the QA Towne Plaza in front of Trader Joe's. We'll stay for a half hour or so of carol singing, weather permitting. No rehearsal necessary, and all ages are welcome! If you have questions, or you'd like to let Dave Carlstrom know you're coming, you can email him at dcarlstrom@yahoo.com.

Advent Art Activity

Between November 27th and December 10th

The Arts team is planning a church-wide Advent art activity. If you are planning a small group meeting of any variety any time between 11/27 and 12/10, let Jenn know when and where, and she will provide all the necessary materials and instructions! Email for more info: jenncavanaugh@hotmail.com.

Advent Calendar of Events (cont.)

Warm Clothing Drive

For Wednesday Night Dinner Community

New or gently used items requested: outerwear (coats, hoodies, jackets, rain coats), and warm winter accessories (wool socks, gloves, hats, scarves). Drop off in the Fellowship Hall Lobby through Sunday, Dec. 25th.

The Longest Night Service

Tuesday, December 20th at 7:00 pm, Sanctuary and Online

We will gather in the sanctuary and online to acknowledge the darkness of this season and, through song, scripture, readings, and prayer, we will name and reflect on some of our losses this year. We will hold these burdens together in the comfort of one another and God's presence.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Saturday, December 24th, Sanctuary and Online

4:00 and 5:30 pm - Family-Friendly

8:00 and 10:00 pm - Lessons & Carols

Seattle-Area Advent Retreats

Dec. 3 - Advent Reflection Day: Through Their Eyes: An Advent Story from 9:30am-2pm at St. Mary's on the Lake Center for Peace and Spirituality in Bellevue; in person and online. Free to attend. For more info and to register, [click here](#).

Dec. 10 - Renewal Ministries Advent Day of Prayer: God's Lavish Love from 9:30am-noon at The Renewing Chapel, Mill Creek. God wants us to know and experience His love like no other love. What does God's love truly look like? This is how God showed His love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through Him. Cost is \$35. For more info and to register, [click here](#).

Dec. 11 (12-2pm) or Dec. 14 (10am-12pm) - Year-End Examine, online with Bethany Dearborn Hiser. Join others in an online Zoom retreat for a chance to slow down, reflect on the past, and prepare for the new year. Participants will be led in contemplative personal reflection through body-based reflection, lectio divina, and Ignatian Examen. \$30 (or sliding scale). For more info and to register, [click here](#).

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Welcome New Members



John Bernhardt

John is an east coast native who fell in love with the Pacific Northwest and loves the outdoors, baking bread, and playing games of all kinds. He and his wife, Robin, both work in physical therapy and share many of the same passions. They are currently involved in a small group at Bethany.

Robin Bernhardt

Robin is a PNW native who lives with her husband, John, in North Seattle. She loves to soak up as much time outside as she can to hike, trail run, cross-country ski, and backpack. She enjoys getting to help people move better and with less pain as a physical therapist in Bellevue. Robin has previously helped lead worship on piano with the ensemble at Bethany.



Janet Hauck

Janet is married to Rob, and they have two grown children with two grandchildren and another one on the way. For the past four years, she has been working as a librarian at SPU. It has been a joy for her to return to work at her alma mater with such a wonderful team of colleagues. It has also been a joy to return to living in Seattle after many years away, reconnecting with family and friends in the area and spending time in the beautiful outdoors. Janet recently joined the Bethany choir.

Robert Hauck

The most important elements in Rob's life are his wife, Janet, their children, John and Elizabeth, and their grandchildren. He is currently in his first year of retirement, and his hobbies, in addition to time with family, are flyfishing, canoeing, and (now) sailing. Janet and Robert are becoming acquainted with the Bethany community, after starting to attend worship in person and participating in a few adult education opportunities.



Nikki Kariuki

Nikki moved to the Pacific Northwest two years ago from Virginia. She likes outdoorsy things and is excited to get into them here in Washington. Over time, she has learned that God's plan is always better. She has been attending Bethany for a year and is currently part of a small group and a prayer team.

Welcome New Members



Maggie Keelan

Maggie Keelan lives in Shoreline with her husband, Tim Gault, and their two boys, Will (10) and Gavin (6). She is a fundraiser for UW Medicine, working with clinician-scientists to advance research and care and improve the health of our communities. She loves running, salsa, and gospel music, and has enjoyed serving with the Children and Family Ministries program as a 1st grade Sunday School teacher. Maggie is passionate about Bethany's outreach ministries, especially King County Youth Chaplaincy.



Kevin McMahan

Kevin and his wife, Lynne, were married at Bethany in 1988, and became members soon after. Their sons, Kory (28, recently married to Ashley) and Trevor (27) were baptized at Bethany and nurtured by this family. After 15 years working at SPU, the McMahans followed a call to work with international students and intercultural development at Northwestern College in Iowa. Now they've returned "home," transferring membership back to Bethany. Kevin is currently figuring out retirement, hoping to remain active in bridging differences here, developing their property in Lake City (adding DADU and solar), and dabbling in ancestry research. He's also a lifelong sports fan.



Lynne McMahan

Lynne's car died and she was living on Queen Anne at the time, so at her brother's recommendation, she walked into Bethany around 1983 and loved it! She and her husband, Kevin, married at Bethany in 1988. They most recently lived in Orange City, Iowa, for 15 years where Lynne continued work as a therapist. After retiring in December 2021, her main role has been sifting, sorting and getting rid of stuff! She loves gardening, hiking, biking, playing games and hanging out with friends and family. Lynne and Kevin are currently attending a home group.



Jennifer Rudsit

Jennifer is a dog mom, publishing professional, and invested friend. She grew up in Gig Harbor and still spends a lot of time with her family there. She's always down for book recommendations, recipe ideas, or a walk around Green Lake. She attends the BPYA (young adults) group regularly (started in August 2020) and has started helping with food planning and logistics for that group. She tries to attend worship in person a few times a month, and you can sometimes find her in the Fellowship Hall serving coffee between services.

What Grows in the Dark

Wednesday Night Dinner Ministry Update by Hannah Kunde, *Director of Wednesday Night Dinner*

As the nights become longer and the temperatures drop, the words of author, Parker Palmer on the “paradox of Fall” always come to mind. He writes about how Fall is a season of great beauty, but also a season of decline, yet, “faced with this inevitable winter, what does nature do in autumn? She scatters the seeds that will bring new growth in the spring – and she scatters them with amazing abandon”.

In the face of a couple years of multiple, layered pandemics that we have been facing as a world, culture and community here at the Wednesday Night Dinner, it has been easy for me to get lost in the darkness. Yet, I have recently been reminded of the ways of the seeds, which have been scattered in the darkness, that are slowly starting to grow.

The seeds of change are taking root at the WND: in the life of one of our community members, this change is taking the shape of a softening we have noticed. Through his friendship with Tom Oines, this man is sobering up and seeking help to find housing and medical care. The seeds of change are taking root at the community-level: just last night we served food indoors and on plates for the first time in almost 3 years. The energy of the room was one of vibrancy, connection, joy and a real sense of community.

The seeds of change are growing within me: seeing this community come together week after week, such eclectic and unique individuals who make up the whole, reminds me of the beauty and resilience of humans, even in the face of challenge. Looking more deeply, in these dark days, I can see, as Parker Palmer writes, “the myriad possibilities being planted to bear fruit in some season yet to come.” I am grateful the WND is stepping into a new season of dining on plates indoors, and I simply can’t wait to witness what kinds of fruit God grows in our midst.



Our faithful volunteers gathering for announcements & prayer.



Welcome back indoors!



Warm Clothing Drive

For Wednesday Night Dinner Community

New or gently used items requested: outerwear (coats, hoodies, jackets, rain coats), and warm winter accessories (wool socks, gloves, hats, scarves). Drop off in the Fellowship Hall Lobby through Sunday, Dec. 25th.

Hands Strangely Warmed

Young Adult Ministry Update by Matt Miller, *Associate Director of Young Adults*

At long last, Bethany's Young Adult Ministry (BPYA) has migrated indoors. While we are incredibly grateful to Misty and David Grieger for 3 winters of outdoor hospitality (read: heaters & blankets), we are thrilled that COVID's easing now allows us to be warm and comfortable inside. If you laughed at the John Wesley "dad joke" heading this paragraph, please see me on Sunday, because I owe you a high-five.

Bad jokes aside, BPYA continues our anchoring rhythm of twice-monthly gatherings on Wednesday nights for dinner, connection, and intentional conversation. With 20+ young adults showing up for the last two months, we've been learning how to be a "big group" and are testing just how many people we can pack into the Grieger's living room. Topically, we wrapped up our long series on sex, sexuality, and dating and have been exploring ethics. Here are some questions that guide our "wrestling with wonder":

What does it mean to live faithfully? How do we live in freedom and yet protect one another from the harm we can do? Where do we chafe at "the rules" of our faith, and what does that tell us? Is moral relativism a dangerous disease, ethically neutral, or neither? And, what does Mark 2:23-25 have to say about that?

Aside from addressing these small, easy questions, a dozen of us took our annual retreat in October, where we enjoyed playing games, cooking for one another, the rhythms of daily office liturgy, and some fascinating conversation about meaningful rest. Finally, a smaller group of us are enjoying a monthly Bible study, where we engage scripture honestly and thoughtfully.

children & family ministries @ Bethany

by Bianca Quezada, *Director of Children & Family Ministries*

Thank you to all the volunteers, staff, and parents who helped Children & Family Ministries thrive during my leave. I am forever grateful for this wonderful church made up of generous souls. For the most part, I am fully recovered. Please keep my stepdad, Gregg, in your prayers as he continues to recover. Luckily, I was able to attend our Fall kick-off on Sunday, September 18th. From what I've gathered the subsequent weeks went swimmingly. Keep reading for more details and a peek at what's ahead.

Sunday Program. This Fall we launched our age-specific classes at both services. On average we see about 25 kids each Sunday, which is about double what we saw when we exclusively met as a multi-age group at one service. With our capable volunteer and staff teams, we are prepared for more families on Sunday mornings! If you've attended, please let me know your family's experience of this new format. A big thanks to all of the classroom and lesson teachers who dedicate so much energy and love into creating a community for all ages.

Family Advent Gathering. Join us on Saturday, December 3rd, 2-4pm in the Fellowship Hall! We are kicking off this Advent season with an afternoon of community, snacks, and activities. All-ages are invited. Please bring live greenery from your yard that can easily be attached to small rings for Advent wreaths (think leafy twigs over branches). Please let me know if you want to volunteer for this event or any program in Children & Family Ministries. God is working through our eclectic community!





by Willy Sydenstricker
Associate Director of Youth

The theme this fall for both middle and high school was ‘Community Rooted in Christ’. I spent much time discussing with leaders and students this past summer and felt this was a topic that would be important for us to focus on (little did I know the entire church was also discussing ‘Belonging’ so it fit together perfectly!).

This fall, we had fixed small groups, meaning students were together with the same group every week. The hope was that this would help cultivate a smaller and more intimate group that they could discuss life and BPYG talks with. My hope is that students enjoyed this and had a chance to connect with people in that space.

As I have reflected on the past few months, I have felt compelled to reframe what I believe ministry should be right now. Last week I watched a [New York Times video](#) that examined the ‘Great Teacher Resignation’ which has left most schools in the US in crisis. It is a very intriguing video for anyone to watch, but especially those who are around students. The video ends with a haunting set of lines that have stuck with me since: ‘*When we have no adult in the classroom it sends a message directly to the kids. And that is, no one really cares about me.*’

It’s no bold claim to suggest that students of all ages are incredibly vulnerable to a whole host of issues right now (maybe more so now than ever before) whether they be mental, social, emotional, academic, physical, etc. Which has led me to shift my understanding of what really matters right now. It seems students need less focus on dogmatics (not that that isn’t important or relevant) and more people they know *who actually care about them*.

So, I would like to leave you with a challenge or something to ponder during this season: How are you showing our students you care? This isn’t a question just for the adults, but also for you students – how are you caring for your friends? Both students inside and outside of the BPYG community? This is a question I am pondering myself this week and this season.

Above all, my prayer is that we might not forget the hope we have in Christ amidst the unknown. It actually makes me think of the song from Frozen: ‘[Into the Unknown](#)’ – and may we remember that, as we walk into the unknown, we walk not only with Christ, but with each other.

