



# ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Bethany Presbyterian Church - January 29, 2023

## PASTOR'S REPORT

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by Pastor Doug Kelly, Head of Staff

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. – Philippians 1:3-6*

When scores of American pastors are retiring, resigning, or just plain losing hope, I catch myself praising God for the joy of serving at Bethany. There is a resilience to her and to you the saints who have shared in the gospel with me from my first day ten years ago until now. God has been so, so good to us.

God's steadfast love and your faithfulness allowed us to not only reduce a projected deficit in June, but to erase it and have a significant fiscal year surplus which benefited our outreach partners tremendously and allowed the Session to give staff a heartfelt bonus. Bethany continues to navigate the pandemic so graciously. Look how far we've come from required registration and masking last January, through gradual relaxing of pew separation to optional masking this fall. Two-thirds of our worshipers are back to attending on campus with us. You traversed this last year with such a spirit of kindness and flexibility.

We welcomed three people to staff: Mike Christensen in an interim capacity helping us love our well-aged buildings; Willie Sydenstricker as our part-time Youth Associate (20 hours/wk), and Matt Miller as our Young Adult Associate (10 hours/wk). The energy, spirituality, and inquiring spirit at Middle School BPYG and the bi-weekly young adult gathering is a testimony to God's movement among us.

We said farewell to some staff. Tim Stelling served us so well as our Facilities Administrator though last winter. Phil Ferrell, our Transitional Director of Worship, finished his time with us in September. His word to me after I anointed him on September 18th and sent him in prayer: "Bethany is special Doug." Hannah Kunde served our Wednesday Night Dinner community for two years with creativity, tenacity, and steadfastness before moving to Bellingham in January. And, of course, a huge change for Bethany's life and culture was the retirement of Linda Cutshall after serving for 40 years in every position between children's ministry to congregational care. Although we grieve the loss of a key staff person, we delight to see Linda in the

pew as a fellow congregant.

Upon Linda's retirement, Session reassessed our staffing situation and decided not to search for a replacement, but rather to reassign Linda's responsibilities. Marisa Gronholz works with the prayer team and manages the Acts 4:32 fund. Danielle, Marisa and I are primary pastoral care givers. And I work with the elders for new members, small groups and congregational life as well as being the moderator of Session and the Board of Deacons. We'll continue to evaluate and assess the fruit of this arrangement.

We are grateful to our Lord for the return of children's Sunday School, a powerful Confirmation Sunday where our 16-17 year olds inspired us with their faith journeys, revitalized outreach PACT teams in support of our ministry partners, the move of Wednesday Night Dinner indoors, and much more.

God has been faithful in 2022 and will be in 2023 as we continue to grow and stretch in new ways. We have a Belonging Team of elders (small groups, young adults, adult formation, membership, and congregational life) whose purpose is to "Empower Bethany to develop into a culture of intention and creativity in welcoming people into meaningful belonging at Bethany." Also, recognizing that our offering income has been flat for 15 years, Session has charged a Growth Roadmap and Opportunities Workgroup (GROW team) to report back in April 2023 with proposed goals for Session in areas of attendance, newcomers, lay leadership and stewardship. In addition, we are in the process of conducting three staff searches: Director of Worship, Facilities Manager, and WND Director (please be praying with us in this process). God, who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it.

Finally, as I reflect on 10 years of ministry at Bethany, I find myself once again very engaged in some aspects of my ministry: stepping into more pastoral care work, preaching, writing devotionals, meeting with staff and Session IN PERSON!! The pandemic exhausted a lot of us, and I still feel it. Two spiritual practices remain life giving: keeping sabbath (Thursday 5:00pm to Saturday, 6:00am) and the Ignatian practice of examen. And it doesn't hurt when you have an extroverted, lovely granddaughter in Yakima you get to hug and enjoy once a month. Indeed, I thank my God every time for the gift of Bethany and serving with all of you.

# ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT

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by Danielle Merseles, Associate Pastor of Youth and Young Adults

*This new plan I'm making with Israel isn't going  
to be written on paper,  
isn't going to be chiseled in stone;  
This time I'm writing out the plan in them,  
carving it on the lining of their hearts.  
I'll be their God, they'll be my people.  
They won't go to school to learn about me,  
or buy a book called God in Five Easy Lessons.  
They'll all get to know me firsthand,  
the little and the big, the small and the great.  
They'll get to know me by being kindly forgiven,  
with the slate of their sins forever wiped clean.*  
– Hebrews 8: 9-11 The Message

Abundant grace to each of you today. As we close out 2022, I am reminded yet again of God's faithfulness and ever-present love for all of us and our church family. Three years ago, the pandemic brought the loss of precious life, routines, and a different meaning of the word 'together.' Today, I sit here reflecting on the ways God's grace brought us through that time, as we continue to navigate the challenges together.

For many of us at Bethany, 2022 brought back gatherings indoors with masks optional. Youth Groups became places for students to learn again about how to interact together – how to play side by side, how to ask questions and talk together. Both High schoolers and Middle schoolers worshiped, joined small groups, and asked amazing questions about faith. Willy Sydenstricker joined us a year ago and has created a space of belonging for our students. Middle schoolers were able to go to camp again for the first time since 2019 which meant the entire group was new to Middle Camp! We navigated homesickness, how to play games fairly, and how to interact with people we didn't know well together. Leaders stepped up and embodied Jesus - walking with students along the way. The High Schoolers flew to New Orleans to serve with RHINO (Rebuilding Hope in New Orleans), a ministry of my college congregation. When the students were not learning how to drywall, paint, and landscape homes and a church that were damaged in a recent storm, I was taking them to my favorite New Orleans places: every one of my dorms at Tulane University, riding the streetcar, and Sno-Balls on Plum Street.

Your prayers and faithfulness also provided for our

College and Young Adults at Bethany. Carina and Eric Long continue to lead a Bible Study from their home for college kids and bring SPU students to second service. Warmth and hospitality are present in this group for students all over the country to gather and hear God's word together. Young Adult ministries (post college – 30ish) blossomed with meals inside (thanks to the Griegers' hospitality!), theology discussions, the addition of a Bible Study, and the first ever Backpacking Trip this summer to the Olympic Coast led by Matt Miller. Their Friendsgiving evening together grew to multiple tables in the house to seat all 22 Young Adults, plus leaders. I am in awe of how Jesus is working in the lives of our Young Adults. Nationwide, ministries constantly lament younger Christians leaving churches, however we are seeing God bring people to Bethany in those age groups. After so much time isolated, being together in warm homes over food and conversation is a true gift.

Personally, this year brought a reminder to me of how God called and created me. I love the days with multiple face to face gatherings with people. Recently I picked a student up from school to walk, get ice cream and talk about their faith. Then, I met another student for a coffee to talk about confirmation. And finally, I went to the Lincoln Varsity Girls Basketball game with a few other students and parents. Many players on that team attend Bethany so the cheer section resembles a noisy Fellowship Hall. God calls us to be God's people – walking with each other, listening, cheering each other on, and sharing our lives together.

And finally, 2022 brought me my first ever sabbatical. It's hard to believe I've been at Bethany over six years now! I want to say thank you to everyone for making that possible. The gift of time away was powerful and would not have happened without volunteers and my colleagues in ministry stepping into some of my roles. It was a very generous gift and I'm grateful for the ways God provided during that time – for Bethany and for myself. I traveled, saw friends and family, wrote, learned through books and online material, learned pottery, and rested. It was truly renewing and a reminder of God's abundant love for me.

May you encounter Jesus – and the abundant love and hope he offers - in each new day's dawn of 2023.

# STATISTICAL REPORT FOR 2022

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## Session Meetings:

January 11  
February 5 Retreat  
March 8  
March 29 Special  
April 19  
May 10  
June 14  
July 12  
August 29 Special  
September 13  
October 8 Retreat  
November 8  
December 13

## Congregational Meetings:

April 24 – To elect a Deacon to fill a vacant position in the Class of 2022  
June 26 – To approve the Terms of Call for our pastors, Danielle Merseles and Doug Kelly  
November 20 – To elect Deacons, Elders, and Nominating Committee

## Those presenting the Word of God during worship services in 2022:

Rev. Dr. Lynne Baab – October 23  
Rev. Dr. Tim Dearborn – November 20  
Jack Gronholz – June 5  
Marisa Gronholz – April 3  
Rev. Derick Harris – July 31  
Rev. Dr. Doug Kelly – Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Feb. 13, 20, 27; Mar. 6, 20, 27; Apr. 17, 24; May, 8, 15, 22, 29; July 3, 10; Aug. 7, 14, 28; Sept. 11, 18, 25; Oct. 2, 9, 30; Nov. 6, 13, 24, 27; Dec. 18, 25  
Rev. Kelly Langford – June 26  
Kyla Marshall – September 4  
Rev. Eliana Maxim – October 16  
Rev. Danielle Merseles – Feb. 6; Apr. 10; May 1; Dec. 4

Matt Miller – July 24  
Medard Ngueita – June 19  
Rob Stewart – July 17  
Jeff Van Duzer – Mar. 13; Jun. 12; Aug. 21; Dec. 11

## Statistical Information

Membership – 12/31/2021	440
Additions:	
Reaffirmation of Faith	13
Certificate of Transfer	11
Total	24
Subtractions:	
Deceased	0
Certificate of Transfer	0
Removal of Membership	1
Total	1

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Membership – 12/31/2022	463
Infant/Child Baptisms	5
Holy Communion served (# of times):	32
Weddings	1

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Respectfully submitted,

*Sylvia Lidell*

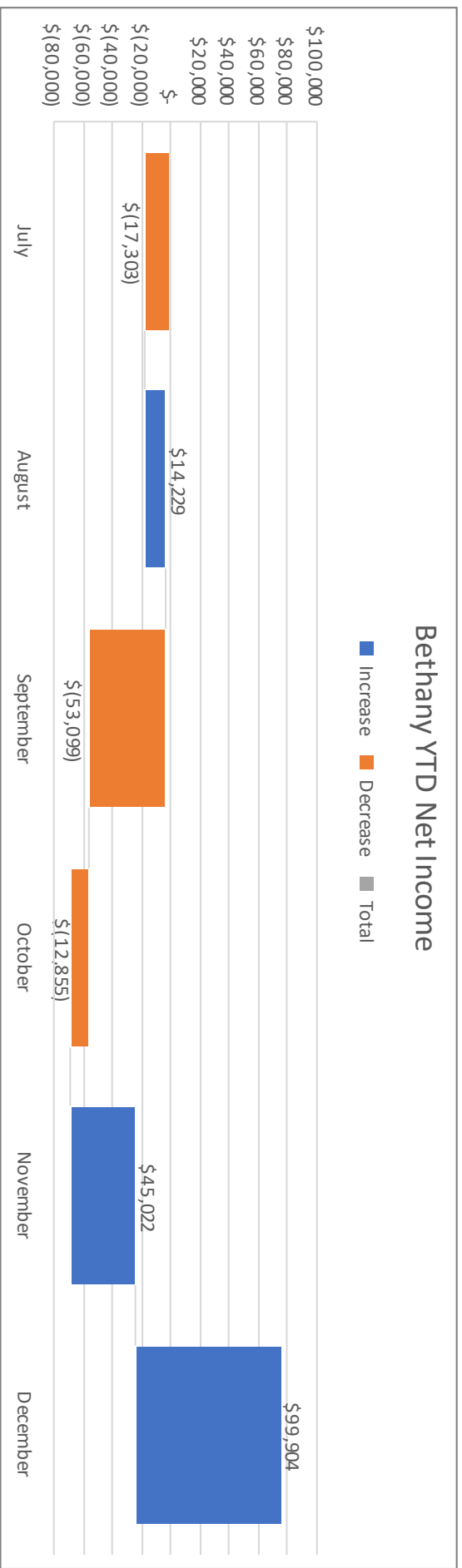
*Reporter for Session Clerk, Lars Johnson*

# 2022 - 2023 FISCAL BUDGET UPDATE

## Bethany Presbyterian Church Financial Report FY23 Year to Date (July - December 2022)

### Financial Highlights:

- 1) In the current fiscal year, Bethany has a net surplus of \$75,330. This is due to strong congregational giving in December.
- 2) Revenue is slightly higher, and expenses are lower than the previous fiscal year. This has led to a larger surplus this fiscal year as compared to last.
- 3) Bethany has received \$43,067 more than budgeted and spent \$25,574 less than budgeted.



YTD Financial Summary	YTD FY23	YTD FY22	FY23 Budget	YTD Budgeted	Actual - Budget	% of Budgeted
Pledged Income	\$688,888	\$680,983	\$ 1,289,485	\$ 644,743	\$44,145	107%
Non-Pledged Income	\$96,094	\$97,991	\$ 197,934	\$ 98,967	(\$2,873)	97%
Little Friends Rent	\$12,500	\$11,600	\$ 21,600	\$ 10,800	\$1,700	116%
Other (e.g. Interest, Use of Facilities)	\$314	\$220	\$ 439	\$ 439		
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$797,796</b>	<b>\$790,794</b>	<b>\$ 1,509,458</b>	<b>\$ 754,729</b>	<b>\$43,067</b>	<b>106%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$722,466</b>	<b>\$773,612</b>	<b>\$ 1,496,079</b>	<b>\$ 748,040</b>	<b>(\$25,574)</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Net Income (loss)</b>	<b>\$75,330</b>	<b>\$17,182</b>				