



Bethany Briefs

FALL 2023

Bethany Presbyterian Church

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Fall Rhythms

by Pastor Doug Kelly, Head of Staff

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:1

Are you feeling the Autumn season? As I am writing this piece for the Briefs, I am experiencing the first fall rain. It is the lovely light Seattle drizzle that I have come to enjoy (something I could never have said eleven years ago before I moved to the Northwest). We are searching for our jackets which have been tucked away for a while. Pumpkin Spice-everything season is upon us. Beautiful challah and other special treats for the Jewish High Holy Days are rolling out in all the local bakeries. And of course, what would the fall season be without college football? My Cal Bears just played against the Huskies (are you grieving the demise of the Pac 12 as I am?).

Fall brings with it certain rhythms. And although we don't celebrate the Jewish New Year of Rosh Hashanah, September does bring to us at Bethany, in one sense, the beginning of a new year. What rhythms with God and God's people will you engage in this fall?

Are you coming to worship? *"I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" It has been quite a while since the peak of the pandemic, but there is hardly a week that goes by where we don't have a Bethany member worshipping in the Sanctuary for the first time since lock down. I just bumped into someone this weekend who's been attending online but announced "we're looking forward to getting back into the sanctuary." Is this a new year for you where the pull to in-person worship finally connects? Bethany is returning to singing hymns and songs with vigor and volume. Is it time for your voice to join in? We have welcomed quite a few new people into worship in the past year.*

Is it time for you to meet some of them and they you? Your health is always a priority, so stay online if you are at risk, especially entering the respiratory infection season. But is this a new year of worship for you?

Fall is a time for new relationships. We had a lot of people on Sunday engaging with Elder Jennifer Steenstra and her team at the Small Groups table in the Fellowship Hall. The Men's Retreat happens the last weekend of September. A new Men's Group launches in October. Our Bethany 101/Exploring Membership class happens on October 21st. Perhaps Fall 2023 is the season for you to step into new community.

Or maybe fall is a time for you to step into service with Children and Family Ministries, Wednesday Night Dinner, or one of our local outreach partners. Or could it be that you are being led to our music ministry? Whatever the tug is that you may be feeling, nothing gets activated until you step from the sideline and onto the field.

One of my new fall practices is a twenty-minute evening walk. Once I am on the sidewalk, I love it – the relative quiet, freedom from media, shades of darkness embracing the sky and horizon. However, getting up from the sofa, turning off the TV, or putting the book on the shelf requires something from me. It is one thing to hear with your ears the invitation *"Let us go into the house of the Lord"*; it is quite another thing to, with your feet, take that first stride. What first step is God nudging you to take in this new season?

Bethany Staff News



AKEN DANIELS, FACILITIES ADMINISTRATOR

We're excited to announce that we've hired a new Facilities Administrator, Aken Daniels, who joined our staff on August 14th. We are incredibly grateful for Mike Christensen's long & capable service as interim in this role. We also give thanks for Bruce Devereaux, Brian Ives, Steve Jones, and Bianca Quezada who served on the search committee for this position.

During the interview process, Aken impressed the team with his kindness, humility, love for God, and perspective of his work in service to God. He's worked on his own and in organizations focusing on property management, maintenance supervision, and support systems, including serving as an operations manager with Catholic Commu-

nity Service and for an apartment management company. He has a Bachelor of Science in Human Services and Management from the University of Phoenix, studied Building/Civil Engineering at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and also studied Marketing and Administration.

We asked Aken to do a little Q&A with us - here are his answers:

What would you like the congregation to know about you? *I am God's favorite. :) I'm married with two kids who are both graduates of University of Washington.*

What are you looking forward to most about being on staff at Bethany? *I'm looking forward to contributing my own quota to the existing success and development of the Church.*

How would your friends describe you? *They would say that I'm sometimes goofy, but serious when necessary.*

What is your favorite travel spot? *I like spending time up in Granite Falls.*

What is your favorite meal? *Spinach sauté in spicy sauce, with pounded yam (made from yam tubers into flour and mixed into morsels, a bit harder than mashed potatoes).*

How do you pronounce your first name, "Aken"? *ACK-EN (Nigerian pronunciation) or AYK-EN or just "AK" are all fine—I'm happy to answer to any of these.*

Ways to Connect this Fall



Small Groups

Are you interested in joining a small group this fall? Are you interested in sharing faith and life with others? Groups begin in Oc-

tober. Contact Group Life Elder, Jennifer Steenstra, with any questions: jennifersteenstra.B@gmail.com. >> [Click here to sign up.](#)



Choir Open House & Ice Cream Party

Thursday, October 12th 7:00-8:30pm, Sanctuary

Do you like to sing? Come learn more about this ministry, sit in on a rehearsal, meet the choir, and see how we prepare music for worship. We'll wrap up our time together with an ice cream party. Questions? Contact Carlos: carlosr@bethanypc.org. Can't wait to see you there!

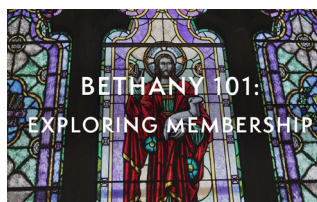


Fall Ministry Fair

Sunday, October 8th after both services, Fellowship Hall

We are excited to gather once again for the Fall Ministry Fair! This is a wonderful op-

portunity to find out more about the various ministries at Bethany and ways to get involved in the life of our community. Stop by after worship, enjoy food and fellowship, and explore our Connect Tables.



Bethany 101 – Exploring Membership

Saturday, October 21st 9:30am-12:30pm, 7 Howe

This class is for anyone who wants to take the next step and explore Membership with Bethany Presbyterian Church in an informal setting. We look forward to spending some time getting to know you and helping you get connected. Refreshments will be served. >> [Click here to sign up.](#)

Bethany Staff News (cont.)



FAREWELL CELEBRATION & RECEPTION For Sylvia Lidell – Sunday, October 15th

Join us for a Farewell Celebration and Reception for Sylvia Lidell on Sunday, October 15th, during worship and after both services in the Fellowship Hall. We are incredibly grateful for Sylvia's 34 years of serving our staff, session, and congregation with flexibility, resilience, excellence, and good humor. Come help celebrate her as she moves into this new season of retirement.

REID COOK, ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

We're excited to announce that we've hired a new Administrative Coordinator, Reid Cook, who joined our staff on September 20th. Reid has been serving at Bethany's Wednesday Night Dinner since fall 2022. He shared that he has been praying for some time for a way to become more active in church ministry. His skillsets and depth of experience in office administration and volunteer training & coordination are an excellent fit for this role. During the interview process, Reid impressed the team with his thoughtful and engaging manner, his love for God, and desire to serve.



We asked Reid to do a little Q&A with us - here are his answers:

What would you like the congregation to know about you? *My journey in faith and brotherhood in the Lord Jesus Christ began in April of 2022, and I was baptized on January 21, 2023. It is my desire to serve Christian ministry in whatever capacity I am called. I love music, especially singing and playing guitar. I love to try new things. I have most recently worked as a meat counter clerk/butcher, a medical scribe and medical assistant, and a landscaper.*

What are you looking forward to most about being on staff at Bethany? *I am so very thrilled to be serving Bethany's ministerial staff, congregation, elders, and deacons. I'm excited to learn about Bethany's ministries and service. I'm most looking forward to watching and serving as Bethany grows and changes over the coming period of years.*

Tell us a little bit about your family/where you're from: *I grew up in Strawberry Point, a very small town in NE Iowa. My mother raised me in town. I spent time helping my mother and late father with hobby farming and farmers markets. On 6 acres, we grew annual vegetables: sweet corn, squash, tomatoes, and dozens more. I attended Starmont High School, where I was active in sports, music and drama, and graduated with a class of about 55. I have my younger brother, Matt, and my mother still in Iowa, as well as four half-sisters, one half-brother, and their children who live in Iowa, Michigan, Colorado, and Nebraska.*

What do you like to do in your spare time? *I'm active in two congregations – Green Lake Church of Seventh Day Adventists and Gift of Grace Lutheran (Wallingford). At both congregations, I serve in worship music and anywhere else I am asked. I will be taking up residence at Gift of Grace as a member of the homestead community, where I will help steward the facilities and the permaculture gardens on the property. I am active in 12-step recovery programs and meetings. I enjoy practicing and playing my guitar, reading and studying the Word, and fellowship with friends and community.*

You're happiest when? *Spending time in love, community, or service with my community and family.*

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Upcoming Outreach Partner Events

by Marisa Gronholz, *Director of Formation and Outreach*



WELCOMING MENDING WINGS IN WORSHIP

Sunday, October 8th (Indigenous People's Day)

Two years ago, President Biden proclaimed the second Monday in October as “Indigenous People’s Day”—the first time a US President has made that proclamation. On Sunday, October 8th, in honor of Indigenous People’s Day, we have the privilege of welcoming one of our ministry partners, Mending Wings, to lead us in worship through their “Dancing our Prayers” program.

Mending Wings is a non-profit ministry that exists to “empower and heal Native youth through leadership development, cultural retention and revitalization programs, and spirituality. The “Dancing our Prayers” ministry are teams of Native teens who travel locally, regionally and nationally sharing their culture, spirituality and way of life. The youth and staff of Mending Wings drum & dance



in full regalia, perform drama, give testimony, and speak on conciliation issues between Native and non-Native America. Their Executive Director, Corey Greaves, will be preaching that morning.

You are not going to want to miss this special Sunday! If you would like to serve as a host home from October 7-8th for some of our Mending Wings youth, please reach out to Marisa Gronholz at marisag@bethanypc.org.

Resources in Preparation for Indigenous People’s Day

Helpful Links:

- Mending Wings Website - www.mendingwings.net
- Eloheh Indigenous Center for Earth Justice - www.eloheh.org
- Christianity Today Article - ["Heritage and Hope: Listening to Native American Christian Voices"](#)

Books:

- Richard Twiss
 - **One Church, Many Tribes: Following Jesus the Way God Made You*
 - **Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*
- Rev. Dr. Randy Woodley
 - **Indigenous Thought and the Western Worldview: A Decolonized Approach to Christian Doctrine*
 - **Becoming Rooted: One Hundred Days of Reconnecting with Sacred Earth*

Outreach Partner Events (*continued*)

This fall, several of our partner ministries are hosting their annual fundraising events. This can be an excellent way to enjoy a night out with friends for a great cause and get to know more about our ministry partners. If going out isn't in your budget, several of these organizations look for volunteers for these evenings so their staff can participate in other ways throughout the event. Here are a list of event dates, descriptions, and links to purchasing a ticket. For more information about any of our partners, contact Marisa Gronholz at marisag@bethanypc.org.

- **URBAN IMPACT: THRIVE 2023 EVENT** – September 30th, 12pm-3pm / [Click Here to Register](#)
Come out and enjoy food truck fare, great music, raffles, and an insider's look at all that Urban Impact is doing. Plus, take the opportunity to say goodbye and catch a picture with Pastor Harvey Drake.
- **NEW HORIZONS: HOPE ON THE HORIZON GALA** – October 6th, 6:30pm / [Click Here to Register](#)
Join New Horizons for an evening of hope at the Seattle Aquarium! We will be focusing on the life-changing difference one stable adult can make in the lives of the young people we serve. Hear from our Executive Director, enjoy a meal with us, and make your impact on ending homelessness, one young person at a time.
- **WORLD RELIEF: WE BELONG GALA** – November 17th, 6:00pm / [Click Here to Register](#)
Join us this Fall to celebrate and support the work we are doing together in our community! We will come together and raise funds for the ongoing work of welcoming, resettling, and empowering refugees and other immigrants. Register for an exciting evening of connection with a cocktail hour, dinner, auctioned items, and stories of empowerment.

Outreach Ministry Updates

UPDATE ON ESPERANZA TRIP - *Esperanza is a ministry on the northwest side of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. They seek to be a place of hope, refuge, and service in the name of Jesus to First Nations people in the surrounding areas.*



From July 15 - 22, a group of 14 folks from Bethany, Elim Baptist, and a church in Surrey, Canada, spent a week at Esperanza. Most of us have been going to Esperanza together for years, so it was great to spend time with friends as well as return to Esperanza after a forced break due to Covid. Esperanza is going through a lot of changes right now, and has very few staff on site. Our small group was a good fit this year - it's much harder to accommodate a large group and have appropriate projects when you are already on a shoestring budget and staff.

We had two main projects this year: a team worked on the fuel tanks that supply the fuel dock, and a team cleaned and prepped camp for the youth overnight summer camp that was scheduled for the week after we left. Jane Frissell was in charge of the kitchen and has a rotating group of folks helping her. There were also smaller projects such as splitting wood, painting new signs for the fuel dock, etc.

We had a wonderful time - it was so good to return to a place that has provided such good memories. Bethany members have been going to Esperanza since the 70's, and we hope to continue that tradition for many more years. We are planning another trip in July 2024 - if you are interested in joining us, contact marisag@bethanypc.org.

Outreach Ministry Updates

UPDATE AND A NOTE FROM KANDELIA and SEATTLE WORLD SCHOOL

Kandelial is the non-profit arm of Seattle World School and one of our ministry partners. Seattle World School is a public school, and Kandelial is a community organization that “addresses systemic inequities so immigrant and refugee families and communities can thrive without having to compromise values, heritage or ethnicity.”

Every year we collect school supplies to support students and families at Seattle World School, so thank you, Bethany family, for your generosity! Here is a note from Sieng Douangdala from Kandelial:

Hi everyone,

We had a very successful first day at SWS! We started with 190 students and 30 more enrolled yesterday. This is a high number from previous years, so we are really excited! Here's a picture of a few of our staff with some of the supplies you donated >>

In community,

Sieng Douangdala, Community Engagement Manager

For more information or for other ways you can volunteer and get involved, visit www.kandelial.org.



UPDATE FROM WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

After a month-long break in August, the Wednesday Night Dinner is back! During the break in August, the volunteer team and Bethany staff were treated to an incredible barbecue by our WND Director, Ken Jordan, and were able to connect with each other and celebrate all that God has done in and through the WND this year. It was a gift and blessing to all of us, and Ken has shared that it is a gift for him to say thank you to all of the volunteers through his cooking. We opened back up on September 6th, and welcomed several guests we had not seen in a while as well as regular members of our community.



For the past few weeks, many of us have been engaging with an article by SPU professor and Bethany member, Katie Douglass, which was published in the May 2023 issue of the Journal of Psychology and Theology under the title, “Human Just Like Me: A Grounded Theory of Disrupting Dehumanization through Table Fellowship.” Katie used grounded theory research conducted by her students as they participated as guests at the Wednesday



Night Dinner and reflected on their experience. Katie referenced this research in her sermon on September 3rd, and at a Faith Formation class on September 10th.

To watch Katie's sermon, [click here](#) or to read the article, [click here](#). Katie's research reminded us of how important mutuality is as we participate in Wednesday Night Dinner as both givers and receivers. If you would like to know more about the Wednesday Night Dinner, contact Ken Jordan at kennethj@bethanypc.org.



by Danielle Merseles
Assoc. Pastor of Youth & Young Adults

Thank you so much for your prayers for Summer 2023! Middle school camp was amazing, partly because of the 14 leaders who loved each of our 20 students, had patience through long hot days, played all kinds of silly games, acted in skits, worshiped, led devotional time and facilitated small groups.

Highlights included students praying for and with one another, worship led by Kyla Marshall with students Etta and Caleb, dancing & hand motions, Elsie's birthday including brownies a la mode, conquering fears on the ropes course, our space-themed skits, sharing communion, and experiencing God's presence.



The High Schoolers tried something new this summer and took a trip together to grow in our relationships with one another and God. We rented a big house on the Stonewater Ranch property near Lake Wenatchee. We soared through the trees on an epic ropes course, ate great food thanks to Dan Johnston, tried to solve a mystery in a life sized Clue game led by Jenn Burkland, worshiped together thanks to Carlos Rangel and multiple student leaders, white water kayaked, and had fun playing basketball/soccer/all kinds of games!

Many leaders taught morning and evening worship and devotional time. We learned about the many instances of God speaking in Scripture and reflected on how God speaks to each of us today. Small groups shared conversations together and students prayed over each other on the last night for over an hour. Their honesty, vulnerability and questions were held by their peers. They shared words of affirmation with one another and created a place where all could experience belonging. After the years of COVID and the impact of the pandemic on our teenagers, this was an answer to prayer. The students needed time to connect, play, and encounter God through community, prayer, worship, nature and creativity.



children & family ministries @ Bethany

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

We had a fantastic summer of robust Sunday programs and a Vacation Bible Camp week that connected and energized our church's families! VBC went so well we're thinking of doing it every year! I am open to any feedback from this year's festivities that will help make next year even better. Thank you to all the volunteers who provided such a lovely environment for our kids. Right now, Children & Family Ministries is preparing for the fall Sunday kids program which includes coordinating 9 classes each week. If you feel the slightest nudge to be a part of this ministry (class leader, arts & crafts extraordinaire, organizer, etc.), we have a role for you!

Sunday Kids Program. This summer we saw an uptick in kid attendance from last summer. Every Sunday I walked into the Parlor wide-eyed, thankful for the volunteers who helped corral and spend time with each student. We added an extra element this summer – music time! Each morning we were led by Carlos or patient volunteers who taught songs to the elementary class. After music we would answer small group questions based on the children's message, then play. For the last five Sundays of summer, kids and adults were drawn into a Bible story with the pieces, backgrounds, and captivating storytelling of Godly Play. In the Parlor we would ask our Wondering Questions, sing, then play indoors and outdoors.



Vacation Bible Camp. This was truly an epic week of fun, community, and learning. Once again, I am so thankful to the 55 youth and adult volunteers who dedicated so much time and energy to hosting our 44 campers. Over half the volunteers were youth! Every morning, families entered the building under a rainbow arch and flying bubbles, welcomed by a loving community, and nurtured through conversation, play, and art. The theme for this week was "God's Masterpiece." We explored the many gifts God has given each one of us for the building up of God's kingdom. I hope each child and volunteer left every afternoon knowing that God loves them, everyone has special gifts, and a curiosity about how to use their talents and interests to better the world.

Fall Program. Children & Family Ministries is working hard to provide age-specific classes starting September 17th. This work includes finding volunteers (please reach out if you want to spend time with adorable kiddos!), readying classrooms, going over best-practices, and of course, covering the process in prayer. Please reach out if you have even the smallest desire to provide a great worship experience for kids and parents at Bethany.



Young Adults Wander the Wilderness (And Much More)

OFF TO TACQUOMA

by Matt Miller, Associate Director of Young Adults



The third weekend of August, coffees in hand (and definitely sleepy), a small group of young adults gathered by 7:00am at the White River Ranger Station to pick up permits for our second annual backpacking trip! This year, seven of us backpacked on a portion of the Wonderland Trail and Northern Loop Trail for three days and two nights. Highlights include: dinner & sunset on top of Skyscraper Peak with 360-degree views of Tahoma (Mount Rainier) and the surrounding mountains; celebrating Steven Westburg's birthday at Fire Creek Camp; deepening our spiritual community through plenty of laughter & no lack of deep conversation and communal question-asking.

This year, our theme was wilderness (Too on the nose? Nah!). We each shared about a personal wilderness space we're experiencing, and together

explored Biblical and theological frameworks for "making sense" of our wilderness spaces. We wondered together how God is providing, making space, testing, sharpening, and clarifying amidst our unique life experiences. We wondered together how to endure the pain & suffering of life's wildernesses—how does lament help us clearly see the landscape we're in? How do celebration and gratitude gift us with eyes to see the path ahead?

Postscript: you may have noticed the reference to Tahoma rather than Mount Rainier. Decolonization efforts are returning native names to our region's great peaks. Peter Rainier, for whom Tahoma was renamed, never actually laid eyes on the mountain historically known to the Puyallup as təqʷuʔməʔ (Tacquoma). As we see throughout Scripture, names matter—Jesus names Simon Cephas in John 1; the riverside place Peniel is named in Gen 32:30 for Jacob's wrestling. Perhaps this is an invitation for us to consider as we move through a world of named places.

Contact Matt Miller (mattm@bethanypc.org) to hear more or see the content we explored together on the backpacking trip.



GENERAL MINISTRY UPDATES

- We continue to see new faces, from recent college grads to recent Seattle transplants, as well as longtime locals simply desiring spiritual community. If you know a young adult who might want to connect, get in touch with Matt Miller: mattm@bethanypc.org.
- Bethany has been accepted into a program with the Forum for Theological Exploration, an Atlanta-based ministry think-tank and facilitation group. Our involvement includes a weekend of brainstorming in a ministry laboratory with other young adult programs, a chance to apply for a grant to develop the ministry further, and ongoing community with other young adult leaders.
- The young adult Bible study cohort preaches to one another on Jonah 1 in September. Be praying that the Spirit will be present amidst the challenge & effort it takes to craft a sermon through quality exegesis & faithful listening to God's leading.
- Bethany's Young Adult Ministry continues to meet twice monthly at a home in Queen Anne for a meal and deep conversation. This year, our theme is "Making Sense of our Stories." We'll explore vocation, suffering & hardship, family relationships, and our own desires.