

THE VISITOR



Volume 67, No. 5

May 2017

**“Blessed to serve God
and share our faith with
all!”**

Join us for Church on Sunday:

Choir Practice	9:04 a.m.
Sunday School for all ages	9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship	10:30 a.m.
Fellowship	11:30 a.m.

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

1312 S. 45th Street; Omaha, NE 68106

Phone: 402-551-1063

Email: blchurch1@q.com

Bethel Home Page - <http://bethellutheranomaha.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BethelLutheranChurchOmaha>

~ Pastors Rich & Rebecca Sheridan ~

~ Pastor Rich Cell: 402-680-3901 ~

~Pastor Rebecca Cell: 402-658-7792 ~

~ Pastor Rebecca: pastor.rsheridan@gmail.com ~

~ Pastor Rich: rich@nebraskasynod.org ~

Church Council Executive Committee:

Jan Kammerer, Pres. (402-210-9870)

LeAnn Ryan, Vice Pres (402-639-7190)

Tom Haskell, Treas. (402-391-7966)

Erica Heiden, Secretary (308-991-7285)

Administrative Assistant: Laura Davis

Choir Director: Stephen Lawrence

Organist: Teri Davis

Custodian: Corey McDaniel

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.

Isaiah 49:15-16

By the time you read this, we will have added a second child to our family, and we look forward to introducing him/her to you all soon as we wrap up our parental leave! This is a season of family celebrations: graduations, weddings, Mother's Day and Father's Day around the corner. At Bethel, we look forward to celebrating with family and friends on Mother's Day with our Service of Musical praise, a culmination of hard work for many of our musically gifted participants: choir, band, brass, vocal ensemble, and additional special instruments. I am also writing this article in March, which is of course Women's History Month. We have just come from installing our new Women of the ELCA officers at Bethel. I also want you all to know what a wonderful ministry many of our women AND men participated in when we hosted Crossroads Connection Prison Ministry at Bethel at the end of February. We had 93 worshippers, including many Bethel members and musicians, prisoners, their families, and volunteers. Pilgrim Hall was full of people, good food, and fellowship after the service. It was a powerful extension of Bethel's family caring for God's larger family.

This Crossroads ministry experience and upcoming Mother's and Father's Days has led me to reflect on God's unconditional love for us as our heavenly parent. I have mixed feelings about Mother's Day, personally. In 2014, I suffered a miscarriage right around this time. It was a very difficult time to go from expecting to be a mother to knowing there would be no Mother's Day celebration for me – maybe ever. It was a challenging period for my faith in God. Of course, this Mother's Day and last year's were much different for me, and it is an example for me of how God is faithful. Around this time, though, I try to remember how I felt and how many people feel if they have an estranged relationship with their

parent(s), have a beloved parent who has recently died, or desire to be a parent but can't be one.

I take great comfort in the images in scripture that describe God as a parent – that God will never forget me even if I am hurt by my earthly parents or fail myself to be all I would hope to be as a parent for my children. We are traditionally familiar with addressing God as “Our Father,” and this is how Jesus addresses God most often. There are also passages in scripture that refer to God as a mothering figure, as in the Isaiah verses above. It may be a challenging idea for some of us to think of God also as a mother because we imagine God to be male, but for many men and women this is a healing image. We have a God who will NEVER forget us – we are inscribed on the palm of God's hands. This Mother's Day, we can honor not just our biological mothers but also those who have served as mentors and mother figures for us. Some of these women have been the face of God to us: Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, day care providers, aunts, godparents, and grandmothers. They have taught us the faith and witnessed to God's great love for us in their strong faith. Whatever complex emotions this Mother's Day may bring for you, may you be strengthened with the knowledge of God's unfailing, unforgettable love for you.

Pastor Rebecca

Pastors' Parental Leave:

Baby Sheridan #2 has arrived. Grace Adelaide Sheridan was born on Wednesday, April 5 at 8:04 a.m. She weighed 7 lbs 13 oz, and was 20 inches long. Erin clapped her hands when she met her little sister!

Pastor Linda Walz will be leading worship for us during our time away. Pastor Jan Peterson is on call from April 24 until the end of our leave. Her number is (402) 689-7201. Thank you for giving us this time to learn how to be a family of four, and we look forward to celebrating our new addition with you all!

500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Prayer Service May 1, 2017 at 7pm at St. Cecilia's Cathedral. Archbishop George Lucas of the Omaha Roman Catholic Archdiocese will preside and Bishop Brian Maas of the Nebraska Synod, ELCA will be preaching. This is a historic worship opportunity for our Lutheran and Roman Catholic

communities to worship together and commemorate what caused a devastating division in the Christian church. While Martin Luther never intended to leave the Catholic Church, his firm stand and challenge to reform the Church has led us to the point of being able to worship together once again. If you can't make this prayer service, another is scheduled at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church on September 11, 2017 at 7pm with Archbishop George Lucas preaching and Bishop Brian Maas presiding.

The Nebraska Synod Assembly is June 2-3, 2017.

Please pray for Bethel's voting members and Pastors Rich and Rebecca as they make decisions for our larger church. This assembly's focus is “We are Lutheran,” lifting up the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. We will be adopting amendments to the synod's constitution, electing synod council members, and adopting the 2018 budget. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will be one of the keynote speakers and presenters as well.

BETHEL NEWS

On Sunday, May 7, we welcome Pastor Paula Lawhead as our guest pastor. Pastor Paula is the pastor of Camp Carol Joy Holling in Ashland, Nebraska, a part of Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. We look forward to hearing what's happening at camp that day!

Congratulations and God's blessings to Kailee Vrba and Mike Willson. They will be married at Bethel on Saturday, May 13! Mike is Jeff Willson's son.

All are invited to celebrate Dolores Claussen's 90th birthday. The party will be at Bethel in Pilgrim Hall on Saturday, June 11 from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. No gifts please. If you would like to bring a card with a favorite memory or story, it would be appreciated. If you are unable to attend, please mail a card to: Dolores Claussen
2820 S. 80th St., Apt. 212
Omaha, NE 68124

Worship/Education News:

The last day of Sunday School, adult Bible study, and choir rehearsal will be Sunday, May 21. Please join us for a special worship service

prepared by the Sunday School during worship at 10:30am that day, with a reception following!

Items Needed for Project Hope:

Our greatest needs right now are for:

- ~Food: non-expired, non-perishable items, especially cereal and canned beans.
- ~Clothing: in all sizes, from newborn to adult.
- ~Baby needs: diapers, especially sizes 4, 5 & 6, diaper rash cream, and tear-free shampoo/body wash.
- ~Personal care items: shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste & tooth brushes, soap, conditioner, bar soap, feminine hygiene products.
- ~Paper products: dish liquid, toilet paper, paper towels, Kleenex tissue, small bottles of laundry detergent.
- ~Household items: pots, pans, dishes, books, videos, toys.

Thank you

Thank you:

Thank you so much to Lisa Nielsen and Robert Ranney for beautifully enriching our Lenten worship services. Both shared their phenomenal musical gifts with all of us. Thank you.

Teri Davis

Dear Bethel Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the Alternative Breaks program at Central Michigan University, we would like to extend our gratitude for allowing us to stay with you during the week of March 4 – 11.

The Alternative Breaks program helps to send out CMU student volunteers both in Michigan as well as throughout the country. Each volunteer trip the Alternative Breaks program sends is geared toward a specific issue related to the service being performed. Our time in Omaha, Nebraska was spent focused on the issue of Youth Development.

Thanks to the compassion and generosity of Bethel Lutheran Church, our group was involved in life changing service experiences in your community that we won't soon forget. Sincerely,

Alternative Breaks

*Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center
Central Michigan University*

Lutheran Women of Omaha

Lutheran Women will meet at Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn, 4200 N. 204 Street on May 9, 2017 at 12:00 p.m. Anna Brewer with the

Women's Fund of Omaha will discuss human trafficking. The offering will go to the same.

Send your reservations to Mardelle Gocsek at (402) 292-1328 by May 7.

Free Summer Concerts

Nebraska Wind Symphony & Swingtones Big Band concerts.

Sunday, July 2, 2017 @ 6:00 p.m. – St. Roberts Bellarmine campus, 11900 Pacific Street.

Tuesday, July 4, 2017 @ 6:00 p.m. – Chalco Hills Rec Area, 154th St. & Giles Rd.

Papillion Area Concert Band at the Sumpturn Amphitheater, 108th St. & Hwy 370, Papillion, NE.
Sunday, June 18, 2017 @ 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, August 6, 2017 @ 7:30 p.m.

Concertgoers should bring personal seating to the St. Roberts Bellarmine campus and Chalco Hills. They may bring personal seating to the Sumpturn Amphitheater or use the permanent seating provided. Personal food items and beverages are welcome at the St. Roberts Bellarmine campus and Chalco Hills. Food and beverages are available for purchase at the Sumpturn Amphitheater.

Bethel member Robert Ranney is a trumpet player in the Nebraska Wind Symphony, Swingtones Big Band, and The Papillion Area Concert Band.

Lutheran Service Corps

Charity Golf Tournament – May 20, 2017

If interested - Contact church office for details.

SERVING IN WORSHIP

SERVING AFTER CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

****Please sign up to host after-church fellowship. The calendar is in the kitchen. Thank you****

ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS:

05/07	JoAnn MacCallum
05/14	Melissa & Zach Carlberg
05/21	Dave & Lori Rogers
05/28	Mary Kay Boschee & Zoe Smith

READERS/COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

05/07	Dan MacCallum/JoAnn MacCallum
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05/14 Erica Heiden
05/21 Marlene Haskell/Tom Haskell
05/28 John Schmidt

BIRTHDAYS

05/01 Edith Nielsen
05/01 Chris Nielsen
05/03 Natalie Miller
05/08 Amber Zimmerman
05/10 Edward Abersfeller
05/11 Penny Anderson
05/12 Kaleb Welch
05/13 Dan MacCallum
05/14 Alaire (Mickie) Abersfeller
05/14 Lois Anderson
05/14 Jeff Willson
05/30 Annette Smith

05/14 Matthew Zimmerman
05/17 Samuel Dasher
05/24 Pat Ranney
05/25 Dorothy Hallgrimson
05/25 Jennifer Mitchell
05/25 Ryan Zimmerman
05/28 LeAnn Ryan

ANNIVERSARIES

05/06 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Ranney
05/07 Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Dasher
05/21 Mr. & Mrs. Dave Rogers
05/24 Mr. & Mrs. Shawn Mohrmann
05/28 Mr. & Mrs. Mark Mahoney

