

Pastor Gerald's Report to the Bethany Congregation

Although this is my tenth annual report to Bethany, I'm still wondering if a report should be a summary of the past year's journey or should it be a reflection on where we might be headed in the future. The perspective through which we look makes a big difference. The first view is quite easy as a historical summary of major events. The second direction seems much more difficult to write about, the road forward, a reflection on where we might be headed. Difficult because, as much as we would like to be in control, our year forward is often seen with uncertainty.

We have had many changes in the recent past, new staff blessings, changes where we sit in worship or what we do in worship. We have changed to having more worshiping on Wednesdays and on line. Our on-line giving has dramatically increased, doubling in the past year, that is all good. Our on-line ministry worship numbers in the last quarter of this year went from 392 last year to 1031 this year. Our in-house worship numbers for the same quarter were 3610 for the last year and 3650 for this most recent quarter. What is my point. We are in a changing world where there are few things that stay the same, everything seems to take new shapes and dynamics.

The only thing that doesn't change is "the One" to whom we are called to worship; Christ remains the only constant in our lives. Whether we reflect individually or congregationally it is important to remember this constant. When we let other changes around us overshadow the constant presence Christ brings, then we have an uncertain future.

2019 will continue to bring changes. In July my role as full-time pastor will change to half-time. As I turn 67, I desire to have more time to spend with LuAnn and our family. Does it mean I care less about Bethany and how we serve Christ? No, certainly not, but what it does do is help me realize that it isn't about us,

it is only about the "One" we serve. Whether I'm working full-time or half time doesn't change that. My desire is that God will be served in however we officially spend our time. Thanks for this past year of blessings, serving as your Pastor, we look forward to 2019. Change does bring opportunities to trust God.

One of those opportunities is that in 2019, Dave Myers comes on staff as part-time intern as he studies for the ministry. The changes for Dave and his family will be filled with both challenges and opportunities. The role of this congregation in walking the journey with them will be the chance to help shape and bless their ministry. Once again, any uncertainty needs to be overshadowed with remembering it is all about living our lives honoring "the One" we worship, Jesus Christ.

I believe this annual report needs to focus on the role Christ has played in our ministry and personal lives. Have we kept Christ in the center of our focus or do we let other distractions in life get in the road? Christ desires to be first, and will not settle for less, that is all that really matters. May 2019 be filled with opportunities to face the challenges of life jointly with Christ.



Lent 2019



The season of Lent begins March 6 with Ash Wednesday. We will again offer two opportunities to worship – at 12 noon and 6:45 PM. The Ash Wednesday service is a solemn service with the imposition of ashes, as we remind ourselves that we are sinful, mortal creatures, dependent on God's mercy. Soup and sandwich meals will begin Wednesday, March 13, at 11:30 AM and at 5:00 PM. Our noon worship and presentation will consist of a group study centered around home and homelessness in the family of God

Pastor's 2018 Annual Report to Bethany Lutheran Church

After 24 years of serving as your pastor, we might wonder what could I say that I haven't said many times before? There is a comfort in stability and longevity. But it can also seem like a rut that is too comfortable to get out of. In some ways, that is a challenge for the whole denomination of Lutheranism, as well as for Bethany's 130+ years of tradition. We get comfortable with our ways of doing things, and then find that change is difficult. One of my colleagues calls himself "An iPhone Pastor in a Typewriter Church."

We worry about our dwindling numbers and aging population and look across town at the new church that is attracting young folks in droves. People ask, what can we do to be like that church? And I have said tongue-in-cheek, "Well, we would have to get rid of our pews, and get rid of our stone altar; we would need to get rid of our fancy silver communion-ware and our stained glass. And then we would need to get rid of our building." So then the response becomes, okay, maybe we don't need to be exactly like them.

But the fact is that there is something about our traditional ways that is no longer drawing in our children and grandchildren. Someone attended a mega-church in another city and noted several things – there was no paper handed out, people were asked to download the church's app on their smartphones for information. There were no offering envelopes in the plates – just a little cash and electronic donating stations in the gathering areas. The service consisted mainly of a 45-minute sermon with young preachers leading, who were dressed in a very casual style. There were multiple invitations to three different types of small groups.

We maybe can't remake ourselves to look like such a congregation, and at Bethany we have made our own attempts at trying new things – switching to Wednesday evening church school with a family-friendly WOW worship, and more

use of technology to extend worship beyond our walls. But there are still some questions worth asking as we look toward our future. Instead of asking, How do we bring members in? we might ask, How do we send our members out into the world equipped to minister? Instead of asking, What should our leaders do for us? we could ask, What is our shared ministry that we do together? Instead of asking, What is our vision for Bethany? we could ask, What's God up to in Minot, and how do we get on board with God's activity? Instead of asking, How do we survive? we might ask, How do we serve? Instead of asking, How do we save or help people? we might ask, How do we make the reign of God more present in this time and place?

These aren't questions with quick and obvious answers, but they are worth pondering. They are questions to live with. By living with these questions throughout the weeks and months ahead, we might find they will take us down a different road that we hadn't even considered. The church of the future is likely not going to look like the one we have known and loved. But we do serve a God who promises to be with us always. And that is a promise that continues to lead us forward.

Thanks for these years we have already walked together. Our family has appreciated your thoughts and prayers for Todd's medical procedures. And we look forward to continuing in ministry together in 2019.

Pastor Janet



Save the Date:

African Children's Choir
March 31st at 8:30am & 10:30am
Everyone is welcome!

Housing will be needed for the Choir and Chaperones. Any questions or if you would like to help out with housing please contact Mary Carlson at 701-720-1454!

Pastor Janet's

Joke of the Month

- * I just did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web.
- * I don't mean to brag but I just finished my 14-day supply of diet food in 3 hours and 20 minutes.
- * Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.
- * Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero outside, they canceled recess? Me neither.

Top Ten Uses for Holiday Fruitcakes – (Now that you still haven't eaten yours):

- 10 Use as a pin cushion
- 9 Use instead of sandbags in event of flood
- 8 Send to US Air Force to drop on the enemy
- 7 Use as railroad ties
- 6 Use as speed bumps
- 5 Collect 10 and use as bowling pins
- 4 Use instead of cement shoes
- 3 Save for next summer's garage sale
- 2 Use slices in next skeet-shooting competition
- 1 Use slices to balance that wobbly table



**Please pick up your Offering Envelopes!
Thank you!**

January Ministerial Acts

Funerals: Roy Turner, Zona Vick, Ardeth Strand
Baptisms: Avery Bourquin, Briley Walker

Jan 2019 Memorials:

In Memory of Levi Grindy

Education from Mark & Rhonda Grindy & family.

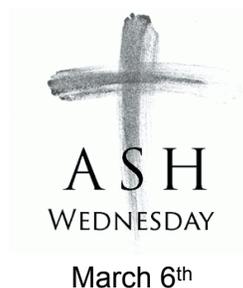
In Memory of Jim Poehler, Marian Bergan, Ida Weber, and Meri Jac Christopherson.

Music from Bill & Bev Jensen.

Music donation from Gary & Becky Hill.



**QUILTING WILL TAKE PLACE 1ST AND 3RD
WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
(FEBRUARY 6TH AND 20TH) AT 9:00 AM**



January Offering

01/02	\$90
01/06	\$5942
01/09	\$2740
01/13	\$151
01/16	\$655
01/20	\$2905
Electronic Giving	\$8400

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH FOUNDATION!

December 2018

Pat Lehner Memorial

Greg Simonson

Ida Weber Memorials

Greg Simonson

Archie & Elaine Kress

Rosie Tollefson

Duane & Sharlene Tollefson

FEBRUARY CAUSE OF THE MONTH
The Northern Plains Children's Advocacy Center

The Mission of the Northern Plains Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is to protect children by providing on-site agency collaboration utilizing a multi-disciplinary team approach in prevention, investigation, assessment and referral for prosecution and treatment of child abuse. The NPCAC serves multiple counties in the northwest and north-central regions of North Dakota, including two Native American Reservations. The Northern Plains CAC provides a compassionate and effective way to bring services to children victimized by abuse. This public-private collaboration significantly reduces the trauma associated with reporting child abuse and holds offenders accountable. Other details of the program can be found on the link to their website: <http://www.undnpcac.org/home.html>

Mark your calendars!

FAMILY CHURCH SCHOOL

is Wednesday, February 27th.



CHURCH SCHOOL CARNIVAL

April 7

The Church School Carnival is an annual tradition to help kids of all ages go to Bible Camp, and teens to travel with LYO on mission trips and to National Gatherings. There will be a silent auction with something for everyone. The silent auction begins on Wed April 3rd. LYO will be serving lunch (sloppy joes, potato chips, nachos, pickles, and lemonade), and a variety of games for the kids. Please watch for a sign-up to bring items for the bake sale and cake walk. The LYO is also asking for donations of buns. Thank you for your continued support of the LYO and Education Program!

A new mission project for Bethany Members

Have you got a basket full of new or like new baseball style caps or visors? Jim Lokken of Minot has goal of making sure every senior citizen in assisted living has a cap to keep the sun out of their eyes when going outside. He has found they also like to have extra's to give others as they come around. In a world of few possessions a cap is a significant gift. For others of us we wonder what to do with the extra's, often just cluttering up the closets. Please consider bringing them to the church so we can resupply Jim's supply. Another item that he enjoys giving them are card decks with 52 cards, either whist or pinochle decks are appreciated. These are the type of gifts those in assisted living do not get from their place of residence. Thanks Jim for this easy request that will help all of us repurpose surplus items in our homes.

LYO in February

2/3	9:30am	Coffee Hour
2/6	7:15pm	LYO: Shelley's Super Secret Surprise
2/10	9:30am	Coffee Hour
2/13	7:15am	Valentine Bingo
2/17	9:30am	Coffee Hour
2/20	7:15pm	God's Work, Our Hands: Food Pantry
2/24	9:30am	Coffee Hour
2/27	9:30am	Waffle Wednesday

The LYO will be hosting Lenten Family Suppers starting on Wednesday, March 13th. Donations of soup, hot-dish, salads, breads, and dessert are greatly appreciated. Please sign up down on the clipboard in the kitchen, in the narthex, or call the church office.

LYO (aka Lutheran Youth Organization) is youth programming for students in grades 6-12. We meet every Wednesday from 7:15-8:30 and have a variety of activities planned each month. Every week we are thankful for the time we get to spend together, the laughs we share, and having a safe space to grow in our faith! If you haven't tried LYO yet we would love to meet you!



CWS Blanket Sunday February 10

Blanket Sunday at Bethany will be February 10th. Church World Service, an organization similar to Lutheran World Relief, provides blankets – both here in the U.S. and overseas to shelter and give comfort to people who have been displaced or are affected by disaster. The blankets cost approximately \$10. There will be special envelopes with the bulletins on February 10. Please give generously. Perhaps give money in memory or in honor of someone who has nurtured your faith. Thank you for your support of this important mission. Help keep people warm.

Some 8,000 congregations and groups across the U.S. hold CWS Blankets events, providing funds to help people in need around the world. For over 60 years, CWS has worked in partnership with local communities to identify their needs and access the resources they need to build the foundation for a more viable future, including:

- Blankets, tents, food and other emergency supplies in the wake of a disaster
- Tools and seeds for refugees returning home to replant their fields
- Wells for families living in drought prone areas to provide clean, safe water to drink and to irrigate crops and gardens
- Literacy training and microcredit for women



Happy Valentine's Day!!

Bethany Birthdays! February:

- 1st – Mirra Malachowski, Delores Selfors, Maddox Westmeyer
- 2nd – Kayla Brentrup, Marian Guss, Karen Knatterud
- 3rd – Sharon Guderjahn, Marissa Michalenko
- 4th – Martha Alvin, Emma Berg
- 5th – Jim Jensen, Christopher Thompson
- 6th – Melvin Schmidt
- 7th – Cleo Berven
- 8th – Tricia Bearman, Susan Burchill
- 9th – Easton Clark, Alan Walter
- 10th – Pat Schimke, Myron Seney, Diane Walker
- 11th – Ashley Otto
- 12th – Boyd Hanson, Orlyn Lovelien, Jessie Thompson
- 13th – Shelby Schlag
- 14th – Cyndee Beutler
- 15th – Sara Colbenson
- 16th – Dustin Breitreutz, Patty Rademacher, Megan Schonberger
- 17th – Richard Holtz, Phyllis Metz
- 18th – Troy Hughes, Jared Jensen, Daryl Nicolaisen, Nora Pederson, Deanna Syverson, Kayla Williams
- 19th – Lorie Bertsch, Megan Enget, Bennett Harvey
- 20th – Breana Morlang, Steven Peterson
- 21st – Aaron Davey, Shirley Dietz, Kirstina Engstrand, Ardis Holen, Laurel Thunshelle
- 22nd – Tim Hoaglund, Ardis Johnson, Ashley Marsh, Darrell Stalheim
- 23rd – Joshua Evanoff, Stacy Sorenson, Brendon Watson
- 24th – Monica Bachmeier, Tyler Berg, Elaine Kress
- 25th – Kari Files, Kari Henderson
- 26th – Dylan Heinze, Carrie Otto
- 27th – Brian Michalenko, Kameryn Stober
- 28th – Sarah Alvin, Jamie Chilson, Alfred Frey, Emily Metz

Also, Happy Birthday to anyone whose name is not on the list. If your name is not on the list then we don't have it, so please call the office with it. Thank you!