



Bethany Lutheran Church

News & Notes

Week of May 21, 2023

Be Blessed + Believe + Belong!

This week at Bethany



Sunday 21 st	Monday 22 nd	Tuesday 23 rd	Wednesday 24 th	Thursday 25 th	Friday 26 th	Saturday 27 th
9:15am: Bible Study & Sunday School 10:30am: worship Service Voters Meeting after worship	1pm: C.S. Lewis "Screwtape" Bible Study		10am: Highland Lakes Bible Study	6 pm: C.S. Lewis "Screwtape" Bible Study		

DON'T FORGET YOUR NAME TAG – MEET A NEW FRIEND IN CHRIST TODAY!

Attendance:

April 23: 28 || 114
 April 30: 24 || 103
 May 7: 131
 May 14: 124

Our Mission Statement:

Bethany Lutheran Church is a place where you matter to God and to us, existing to glorify the Holy Trinity, to administer the sacraments, to teach and preach the gospel in all its purity, to grow in our relationship to God.

WORSHIP----CONNECTING-----GIVING

How to Contact:

Pastor Mike: Call the church office - 352-787-7275

Office hours Mon.-Thurs. 8:30am-2:30pm (but I can be out doing visits or appointments)

Friday is my off day.

I am always open for conversations, and I want to know any concerns/prayers/joys. We're in this life together as God's family. Pastor Mike

Church Office: 352-787-7275 | email: BLCLeesburg@gmail.com

Office is open 9am-1pm Mon.-Fri.



Facebook: We are “Bethany Lutheran Church Leesburg FL” on Facebook

Website: www.bethanylutheranleesburg.com

YouTube (Livestream): www.youtube.com/bethanylutheranleesburg

Online Giving --- It's simple. Go to our website at <https://www.bethanylutheranleesburg.com/home> and click on DONATE tab. Follow instructions. Your donation will be tracked through church records as usual.

Altar Flowers: if you would like to provide a bouquet or two of flowers for a special occasion or just because, sign up on the Flower Chart in the Narthex. Cost per bouquet is \$35. The flowers are yours after the service on Sunday.

Our Church Calendar exists online and is found on our website under the menu item “Connect.” There's a lot going on lately and that's a great place to check up! If you see that something is not on there that should be, let us know in the office!

Pastor's Corner

Be Blessed + Believe + Belong!



This Sunday in our worship service we will be observing Jesus' Ascension to the right hand of His Father. Ascension Day doesn't get the same kind of treatment that Christmas and Easter. So I ran across this article from Rev. Dr. Joel Biermann (one of my professors from Concordia Seminary) that gives us **seven (a nice Biblical number!) reasons to rejoice on Ascension Day:**

1. Jesus ascended so that the Holy Spirit could descend.

The Spirit is the promised "other Comforter" essential to the life and growth of the Church—no Holy Spirit, no Church, no faith, no salvation. Jesus ascended to send the Spirit.

2. Jesus reigns now over everything.

He has been enthroned at the Father's right hand, and the full glory of the Godhead is His. The ascension is His coronation ceremony and highlights the splendor and authority of Jesus over every king, ruler, and nation.

3. The ascension was the plan from the very beginning.

Just as the passion and resurrection were predicted in the Old Testament, so too was the ascension. Jesus' extraordinary visible ascent is the essential capstone of his earthly ministry.

4. Jesus ascended bodily.

Joined eternally to true God, a true human body is the object of honor and worship. This has profound impact on our understanding of God's nature and also human nature. The material aspects of God's creation are very good and endure forever.

5. The commission announced by Jesus is now in full force.

Just as a death must precede the implementation of a will, so the ascension of Jesus must precede the implementation and empowerment of the command to the disciples (you included) to witness the reality of Jesus to the world.

6. The ascension of Jesus is a preview of the promised consummation.

At the Last Day Jesus will return as He went: physically and visibly. It will not be a "spiritual" or metaphorical return, but an actual coming of His physical body. No one is going to miss it.

7. Jesus is Lord.

Not only did Jesus come back from the dead, but He now reigns on high. He is Lord of all creation. He is Lord of your life.

Whether or not anyone else joins you, you've got much to celebrate on Ascension Day. At the very least, take a moment to gaze skyward, study a cloud, and offer a prayer of thanks and praise and anticipation to the one who now reigns on high and who is coming soon.

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES!

Sunday School:

Pre-school through elementary: *Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum*, Unit 3, which with key teachings of Jesus: The Good Samaritan, the Lord's Prayer and the Good Shepherd.

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Sunday morning Bible Class: We're spending time brushing up on the basics as we study Luther's *Small Catechism*. Join us. The discussion begins at 9:15 Sunday morning.

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Wednesday Morning Highland Lakes Bible Study!

Where: Highland Lakes Clubhouse; 5500 Clubhouse Dr, Leesburg, FL 34748

Date/Time: Wednesday from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information call the church office.

**** THIS BIBLE STUDY WILL BE ON BREAK THE MONTH OF JUNE ****

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Monday and Thursday Bible study

Monday 1:00 to 2:30 pm OR **Thursday evening** 6:00 to 7:30 pm in Founder's Hall or via Zoom. Study of the C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, a fascinating study of temptation and of human nature told from a reverse psychological perspective. Screwtape is a senior tempter in the Lowerarchy of Hell (which is presented as a dreary bureaucracy). He writes a series of advice letters to his nephew, Wormwood, a junior tempter who has just been assigned his first human "patient" to shepherd on the way to Hell. We'll also consider the short follow-up publication, *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*.

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Monthly Men's Prayer and Fellowship Breakfast will meet on **Thursday, June 8th at 8:30am**, at Bob Evans (360 Colony Blvd, The Villages). We will watch a short video (on the Apostles' Creed) with discussion, followed by a time of prayer. This is open to all men (whether members of Bethany or not).

Beverly Shores Elementary Faith-Based Partnership



Next year the school is planning a new school building. If you have ideas for features to include in the new building, you are invited to attend planning meetings starting in July. We will announce the meetings in News and Notes.

Much of the work of our Beverly Shores Faith-Based Partnership takes a break over the summer. Thank you to all who support this effort.

One big goal that the school would like us to achieve next year is to **grow in our involvement in the classrooms**. They have need of **volunteers to help read with kids or spend one on one time helping them**. *If you would be willing to volunteer in this way, please let Pastor Mike know.* There's a process we must complete in order to officially sign people up.

This is a great way to show these kids the love of Jesus and love our community in an incarnational way. It also helps to open new doors for future ministry with the kids and families of our neighborhood!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – JUNE 5-9TH

If you would like to post a flyer in your neighborhood, please take a flyer from the table in the Narthex.



We are increasing our numbers of registered VBS attendees. We have a link on our home page for children to be registered now. One goal is to have one male and one female crew leader for each group of children. Crew leaders will be an active part of the team and engage in all the activities with the children they are building relationships with during VBS.

We have children that would love to come but need transportation. We will be renting a van, so we need a driver and a helper to fill our transportation needs.

There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for any additional volunteers. We may not need everyone but if we know who is willing and can also act as a backup volunteer it would be wonderful!

Bethany Singers Will Be Returning

As we transition some schedules and our music director heads north for the summer, we will once again have a summer choir, Bethany Singers. **The Singers will begin rehearsing Tuesday, June 13 at 5 pm.** If you are interested in joining for the summer, let Margie know!



Also **if you wish to share any musical talent by singing or playing an instrument**, let Pastor Mike know so we can all be blessed by your gifts! We usually have special music every service, so there are ample opportunities to contribute.

Bethany T-Shirt Day Rescheduled!

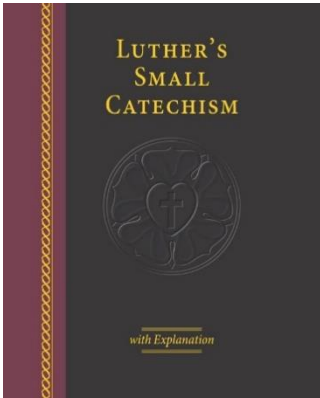
In an effort to try to coordinate our clothing as a purely optional part of our worship, we had scheduled Sunday, May 28th to be “Wear Your Bethany Shirt” Sunday. However, that Sunday is also Pentecost Sunday, which is one of the Sundays in the Church Year where we also invite congregation members to wear red. So here’s the new plan:

Sunday, May 28th – Wear Red for Pentecost (we’re also welcoming new members!)

Sunday, June 4th – Wear Bethany Shirts

Of course, remember your participation in this is purely optional. You receive no special merit, credit or commendation in the eyes of God for these activities. It is though an outward way that we can communicate our inner oneness in Christ as the Body of Christ.

BIBLE STUDY NEWS:



Sunday morning Bible Class led by Pastor Mike: We are embarking on the study of **Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation** beginning **May 7th**. The book, published by Concordia Publishing House, will be used to guide our study. Copies have been ordered from the publisher and will be available from Tom upon their arrival. This class is held at 9:15 am Sunday morning in Fellowship Hall.

The Small Catechism covers the basic elements of our faith: the Ten Commandments, The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, The Sacrament of the Altar, Daily Prayers and a host of other topics that relate to our journey of faith.

We look forward to your joining us as we review these most important elements of our faith.

This 2017 edition of the Small Catechism is available from Amazon for \$15.99 at [this link](#).

Lessons Learned from The Screwtape Letters

For some weeks now, some Bethany folks (and some guests) have been doing a Bible study based on *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. The book is a study of temptation and of human nature told from an upside-down perspective. Screwtape is a Senior Tempter in the Lowerarchy of Hell which is portrayed as a dreary, endless bureaucracy. He is giving advice to his nephew, Wormwood, a Junior Tempter who has just been assigned his first "patient." Thus the advice that Screwtape gives is designed to corrupt and condemn the "patient." Some folks have been troubled by this negative literary device, so we have set ourselves to restate the lessons that we have learned in a positive format. Here is the first installment:

- Always give thanks! Thanksgiving is the antidote to worry.
- Even my abilities are not "mine" – they are gifts.
- Old habits resurface, so one needs continual prayer for forgiveness of sins.
- Recognize that distraction is a huge problem; we need to stay focused on living our faith.
- Keep good company.
- Pay attention to small daily decisions. Each one is important.



This week we had **over 45 people in Bible Studies!** Praise God!!

This week's Memory Verse:

Romans 12:12

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” **If you have prayer concerns, please contact the church office to be added to the prayer list.**

**Ongoing prayer list – We pray for all people according to their needs.
Print this page for your daily prayers**