



Bethany Lutheran Church

News & Notes

Week of May 28, 2023

Be Blessed + Believe + Belong!

This week at Bethany



Sunday 28 th	Monday 29 th	Tuesday 30 th	Wednesday 31 st	Thursday 1 st	Friday 2 nd	Saturday 3 rd
Wear Red for Pentecost 9:15am: Bible Study & Sunday School 10:30am: worship Service	Office closed. No 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

May 21: 131

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:

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

Friday is my off day. Phone # 352-787-7275

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.

Do you have something for NEWS & NOTES?

Email to April Harrison (BLCLeesburg@gmail.com) by early **Thursday** each week to share in the News & Notes. Earlier in the week is preferred.

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!



Everyone likes a party. This Sunday is another important day in the Church calendar. I know we've been hitting a lot of them lately, but things quiet down over the summer months, so this is one of the last few "big" Sundays. The special day we observe on Sunday is called "Pentecost." The word Pentecost is from Greek and simply means "Fiftieth." It is the 50th day after Passover. For us as Christians, Passover has been fulfilled in a greater way through Easter (1 Cor. 5:7) and so we usually refer to Pentecost as the 50th day after Easter (counting Easter as day 1), not Passover.

Pentecost is a Festival that has a long history. It is one of the three festivals that God commanded the Israelites to observe every year (see Exo. 23:14-17). In that context, Pentecost was called the Feast of Harvest and it occurred as the first crops of the growing season gave their fruit, thus it was also called First-fruits.

But Jesus transformed this festival into more than an agricultural festival. It turned into a Spiritual celebration. As the story is told in Acts 1:1-11 (which we will read in church on Sunday), . It is the story of how the Holy Spirit comes on the first apostles and they are given the ability to speak in other languages so that all the people who are gathered.

Pentecost isn't the first time the Holy Spirit had come (remember for instance that Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to the disciples on Easter (John 20:22)), but the Holy Spirit gave new gifts to these believers and the power given was the power to proclaim the Gospel to all of those visitors who had come to Jerusalem for the Pentecost festival.

Little did those people who had come to Jerusalem know that the real first-fruits celebration was the first-fruits of the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the Gospel must be proclaimed to all nations, beginning first at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). But now they were part of something new. The Kingdom of God which had come through Jesus now came to them through the words of Peter and the others. They too received the Holy Spirit through the waters of Baptism (Acts 2:38). But this promise of salvation wasn't just for the people gathered at the Festival that day.

All those people returned to their homes, all over the world, and told others about this new way that God had worked a salvation for all people, that Jesus had ascended into heaven, and one day they too would be there with him. First Jesus, but soon all believers would follow Him.

And now these followers of Jesus are sharing in a heavenly party with a heavenly promise. Salvation, forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit. These gifts aren't just for them. They're for their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren too. They're for the whole world. These 3,000 who believed, they might have been among the first to hear this news about what Jesus had done, but they are not the last. We're part of this group too. So let's celebrate and rejoice in the work of the Holy Spirit in us too. After all, everyone likes a party.

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES!

Sunday School: Pre-school through elementary: *Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum*,
Returning to the Old Testament: key episodes of the Bible narrative from Adam and Eve
through Solomon's building the Temple.

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Sunday morning Bible Class led by Pastor Mike 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.

**** 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 15th 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.

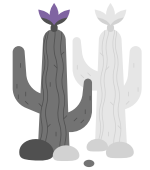
Much of the work of our Beverly Shores Faith-Based Partnership takes a break over the summer. Thank you to all who support this effort.

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 webpage 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!

Even Crafters Take Breaks...

Due to summer vacations and travel, **Bethany CRAFTernoons will be taking the summer off.** We will let you know when we are going to be picking back up in the fall..



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 just show up!



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.

More New Members Welcomed!

The timing is great that on Pentecost Sunday, we are going to be welcoming more new members to our congregation, but the timing is also challenging because it’s Memorial Day weekend and not all of them will be able to make it this Sunday, but I do want to put their names before you (and pictures will follow!

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 next installment:

- Praying from the heart without words can be a powerful benefit; it goes beyond the “devotional mood.”
 - Since “all mortal tend to turn into the thing they are pretending to be,” try pretending to be a better Christian.
 - If I insist things are “mine,” that implies that I am the creator – which is incorrect – is wrong! I am the recipient of God’s grace.
 - We must strengthen in ourselves the habit of attending to universal issues and withdraw our attention from the immediate stream of sensory experiences.
 - We need always to remember that we are strangers here and that heaven is our home.
 - We need to pray as we are commanded to pray and then leave the results to God.
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This week we had **over 50 people in Bible Studies!** Praise God!!

This week’s Memory Verse:

Philippians 1:6

“I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”