

Annual Report

Bethel's Annual Report shares the work of our ministry as we seek to answer Jesus' call for our congregation and our lives. This reports shares what our Ministry Teams have accomplished over the past year, what they had hoped to accomplish but were not able to, and what they hope to accomplish over the next year.

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Administration

Pastor's Report

BY: PASTOR JEFF WILSON

I have enjoyed reading the ministry reports and reflecting on all that we have accomplished at Bethel over the last year. As is the case for all churches, we have had our joys and our challenges over the last year. My prayer is that the joys sustain us and that we learn from the challenges.

Since I came to Bethel in December 2007, I have observed both some very healthy and good ministry, as well as some areas needing improvement. I have seen people passionate about ministry. I have also seen people who are burned out and disillusioned. Some ministries have functioned very well while others have struggled.

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us that “there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” and that God “has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into [our] minds” (Eccl 3:1, 11). We look back at all of the 120 years of Bethel history. We must also look forward. Where is God calling us now? Are there aspects of what we do now that we can either improve upon or change?

As you read this report, you may be surprised at some of the things the congregation accomplished. You may also be disappointed at what was not accomplished, or you may see holes in the ministry. That is part of the benefit of a report such as this - we celebrate and we look for opportunities to grow and nurture the faith.

At the Leadership Retreat on February 27, we presented the “lollipop chart” and began filling in the holes we could see. Some of us like “structure” while others resist it. The reality is that we need some structure; otherwise, we are not being good stewards of our time, talent, treasure, or the ministry entrusted to us. I think we are beginning to work with enough structure that helps us do the work of ministry without being a burden. The structure and our ministry is a constant work in progress. I invite you to be part of the ministry we all share as God's children working in this part of God's Kingdom.

President's Report

BY: MARY HILL

The President is a member of the Mission Council and is elected by other members of the Mission Council. The president's role is to preside over all Mission Council meetings and annual congregational meetings as well as enforce the

Constitution. The President is to perform the general duties as are common for the office, including such additional duties as may be warranted. The President works very closely with the Senior Pastor and other leaders of the church to insure that Bethel continues to answer God's call.

This past year the President and Mission Council began looking at the structure of ministry being done. It was clear that there were many volunteers doing a lot of ministry, but there was a lack of structure and organization. The process of developing Ministry Teams was initiated.

Additionally, the Mission Council also drafted a new Vision, Mission, and Core Values statement.

The President and Mission Council worked very hard to trim the budget. Although the budget that was approved by the Congregation showed a deficit, it was a significantly smaller deficit than in recent years.

Also in 2009 it was decided to not renew the contract for the then current Director of Music. The President and Mission Council formed a Search Team to begin the process of hiring a new Director of Music. An interim Director of Music Ministry was hired on November 1, 2009 and an offer of permanent employment was presented to, and accepted by, that same interim Director of Music Ministry on February 1, 2010.

Goals for the coming year include (but are not limited to):

- Establishment of Ministry Teams with 4 voluntary positions per Team:
 - Chair
 - Budget Manager
 - Communications
 - Involvement/Assimilation Coordinator
- Establishment of Search Team to begin process of looking for Director of Youth and Family
- Increase in attendance and giving
- Increased visibility in the community

Bethel looks to 2010 with optimism, energy, and momentum. The President is eager to not only encourage the ministry effort currently being put forth, but to foster extension into the community without losing focus of the internal needs of the members and the church.

Bethel Preschool

BY: KATHY STEWART

The goal of the Preschool continues to be maintaining a professional and caring staff to nurture and educate preschool age children. The Preschool Board continues to seek additional board members as well as increase student enrollment. Although the program has been able to consistently “hold its own” (remain financially self-supporting), enrollment has been below capacity for several years.

The efforts of the preschool director and teachers in fundraising have substantially helped with economics. Two fundraisers have been used during the year: Joe Corbi’s pizza in the Fall, and Gertrude Hawks Chocolates around Easter. Parents seem to enjoy these products so there is no “selling” involved - that is, the forms are available if they wish to buy.

To address enrollment in the coming year (2010-2011), we are planning two changes: where we advertise, and what classes we offer.

Where we have advertised in local papers in the past, we don’t seem to get a lot of response. In 2010, we will be advertising in the Prince William Leisure Magazine. Besides having a substantially longer shelf-life, this publication is placed where parents look for other activities to have their children enrolled in. There is a significant cost increase for advertising with Leisure, but we are anxious to see if it will attract new families.

After thoughtful deliberations, we have decided to eliminate the 2010-2011 Pre-Three class which meets Monday mornings for 2-hours in the Spring. Although it was developed as a “feeder” program into the 3-year-old class, we are hoping that by converting the Wed-Fri 3’s class to Mon-Wed-Fri we may attract new and additional students.

In addition, we have decided to reduce the two, 3 day 4-year-old classes to one class, and convert the other to a 5 day, 4-year-old class. Historically, and especially since area school districts went to “all day Kindergarten” the 5 day class stays at or near 100% enrollment. We hope the additional offering of a 5 day will be both appealing to parents and help us come closer to our overall enrollment goals.

As we fulfill our Mission to successfully prepare children for entrance into Kindergarten in a concerned and loving Christian-based environment, we would be very pleased if additional Bethel members would join our mission. There are no prerequisites to joining other than the love of children and an interest in their continued education. Typically we meet the last Tuesday of the month and our meetings are open.

Congregational Care

Introduction

BY: PASTOR JEFF WILSON

Congregational Care is one of the ministry areas we focused on this past year. Pastor Mary Kieser worked with a group of Congregational Care coordinators (Marg Anderson, Ruth Passarge, and Peggy Schilpp) to help facilitate communication and ensure that Bethel's people are cared for. We have begun sending Holy Communion to the sick and homebound with trained Eucharistic Ministers.

BY: PASTOR MARY KIESER

Working together with the Congregational Care Ministry Team the following goals were established: to name persons presently involved in the Ministry, to identify the care needs of the congregation, to determine what teams were already at work meeting these needs, and to prepare a handbook delineating the "who, where, when and how" as information for persons who might be interested in also participating in this sacred mission.

As part of Bethel Lutheran Church's mission and vision, small Congregational Care Ministry Teams seek to respond in specific ways with love and care to meet human needs within the church family. Seeking to serve Christ in the "here, near and far" some of the congregation's caring is expressed in person, some from a distance. Devoted staff members support all members in these ministries as together we seek to faithfully shepherd the flock of Jesus Christ in this place.

To those ends the following strategy was developed: 1/ Personally interviewing in the fall persons presently involved in Congregational Care 2/ Asking such persons to provide written feedback on a "Handbook Survey" noting the scope of ministry and ministry expectations. 3/ Conducting a spring luncheon meeting planning session with opportunity for further reflections on the ministry and providing a draft of the proposed handbook for review.

During the course of the year specific ministries also worked to implement certain unique goals: 1/ A "Steering Committee" with particular insights into individual needs in the congregation met monthly to focus on well being of parishioners, needs for special assistance such as a visit by a pastor or parish nurse, provision of meals or transportation, and strengthening by prayer. 2/ A Coordinator for Home Communion services was identified along with parishioners who wished to take Communion consecrated at Sunday worship to those unable to get to Church. A training session was held for those volunteers and publicity initiated to educate the congregation of the availability of the Eucharistic Ministry. 3/ Congregational Care folks participated in an every member visitation in an effort to reach out to all of Bethel's members.

Individual reflections will be offered by specific leaders of Congregational Care Ministries. In looking back, I am most grateful for the dedication of so many folks who accomplished so very much to share the love of Christ with others at Bethel. Currently I am reflecting on congregational care issues monthly in the “Bell Tower” and will be emailing prayer perspectives in Lent to those who so request. Looking forward it is my hope to continue to expand Bethel’s prayer ministry. It has been my greatest joy to visit and meet more of Bethel’s members as together we share and deepen faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Home Communion

BY: JIM ANDERSON

Beginning in April 2009, Bethel setup a Home Communion program and trained members to take Communion to those in need at their homes or in the hospital. This ministry is intended to supplement the visits of the Pastor(s). To set the program up we drew from the experiences and service bulletins used in other congregations, and a service used by Pastor Wilson. Pastor Mary Keiser, Jim Anderson and Connie Houtz crafted a simple service bulletin for Bethel's Home Communion. Pastor Wilson and Jim Anderson led a class in April that trained Bob Schlipp, Ruth Passarge, Kathy Stewart, Craig Lightner, Grace Schultz, Connie Houtz, Brenda and Gene Ifert in the foundations of Communion and the steps used in these visits. A traveling communion set was purchased for use by the team (a second set was later obtained to accommodate multiple team visits). Since preparations for the normal Sunday Communion begins with setup by the Altar Guild, they are contacted to have the travelling set on the altar for consecrating the elements during the 8 or 11 am services, as needed. Communion has been taken to eight or ten shut-in individuals and their family members; several have had Communion many times. (Note Communion statistics are part of Bethel’s Congregational report). Some of the visits have been on Sunday but some have occurred mid-week. The team was able to support a Hospice care request for Communion to be taken to someone who was not a member of Bethel. Visits bring Communion as a natural extension of our 8 or 11 am service, but also they provide a connecting point to the Bethel family for those who are unable to attend the regular service. Members desiring Communion at home should call the Church Office (703-368-3943) during the week Jim Anderson (703-368-1440). This has been an enjoyable ministry.

Jim Anderson, Coordinator

Parish Nurse

BY: RUTH PASSARGE

Goals:

- To provide compassionate care to the Bethel congregation.
- To provide education and be a resource to the congregation regarding health issues.

Parish Nurse Activities:

- 1) Home visitation and telephone contact to members of the congregation and their families experiencing illness and debility. Visits or contacts were made every 1-2 months to families with ongoing needs and to others as the need arose. Parish Nurse visits are limited to education, emotional support, recommendations regarding health issues and referrals rather than direct nursing care.
- 2) In collaboration with the Shepherding, Home Meal Delivery, Congregational Care Committees and the pastor, families needing parish nurse intervention were identified.
- 3) Through the leadership of Pastor Mary Kieser, the Congregational Care Ministry was formed to organize and coordinate efforts of the various congregational care ministries. The Parish Nurse meets monthly with the Peggy Schilpp from Shepherding, Marg Anderson from Meal Delivery and Pastor Mary. These meetings have helped to coordinate and get the appropriate resources out to those in need.
- 4) With the H1N1 virus epidemic fears starting in March, the parish nurse concentrated on education through weekly bulletins, e-mail communication and postings on the parish nurse bulletin boards. Education included signs and symptoms of the flu, treatment and prevention.
- 5) In October the Parish Nurse along with assistance from Brenda Ifert, RN hosted an Inova Fight the Flu Clinic at Bethel. Children were included this year for the first time and the nurse from Inova administered 49 seasonal flu shots, a record number for the church. Unfortunately, due to limited supplies of the H1N1 vaccine, only certain facilities were administering those immunizations to certain target groups. Identification of these groups and where the vaccines could be obtained were posted weekly by the parish nurse.
- 6) In the spring, the Parish Nurse participated in home communion training to augment her visits by being able to provide home communion to the homebound and their families. This has been mutually beneficial to all and has been well received by those who have participated.
- 7) In September, the Parish Nurse had a table at the Ministry Fair which included education about flu prevention, treatment and instruction to children who stopped by on appropriate hand washing and infection control.

Plans for 2010:

- 1) Continue activities as above to provide health and wellness education and compassionate care to the members of the Bethel family.

- 2) Would like to provide blood pressure monitoring on a 1-2 month basis to the congregation.

Respectfully submitted:

Ruth Passarge, RN, Parish Nurse Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church

Shepherding Team

BY: PEGGY SCHILPP

As part of the Congregational Care Team, the Shepherding Team at Bethel is a group of people who care for the members of our Bethel Family in times of need or in times of joy. The concentration of the group so far has been on members who are hospitalized, homebound, or in nursing or rehabilitation centers. The group is notified of a need via email and responds accordingly. During 2009, approximately 30 emails were sent telling members of the group of such things as hospitalizations, extended illnesses, deaths of close family members of our Bethel members, births, special birthdays (over 80), special anniversaries (over 50), and updates about ongoing situations. Lists of people to be remembered were also distributed prior to Valentine's Day and Christmas. As a result, we hope our Bethel members who need a little extra care are getting some calls, visits, cards, notes, and especially, prayers.

There is much more that could be done by this group. Some goals might be:

- Encourage more members to be Shepherds
- Create a group of Shepherds who would concentrate on the care of members showing signs of inactivity
- Create a group of Shepherds who would concentrate on being in closer contact with our visitors

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Schilpp

Shepherding Team Coordinator

Education

Sunday School

BY: KRIS HANGGI

The Sunday School program provides Christian Education for youth 3 years old through high school. This year, we are using a lectionary-based course material called SPARK from Augsburg Fortress. In 2009, average attendance was about 50 per week.

One of our goals for the coming year is to see greater attendance in Sunday school.

The purpose of the education ministry is to provide youth with an education in the teaching of the church lessons, understanding of the Bible, creed and general Bible stories. Provide support to Parents and Godparents in fulfilling the vows made at baptism of a child.

Involvement in ministry: General Support bringing children to Sunday School and attending Sunday School activities such as the Christmas program. Direct involvement would involve teaching or assisting with a class.

Adult Education

BY: CONNIE HOUTZ

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

While theological education is a foundational priority of the church, we need to use our gifts to not only learn but to use our learning in mission to our church. Grounding in Scripture and the Lutheran confessional tradition equips us for the church's mission in a rapidly changing world.

Bethel's Adult Education Forum offers a unique opportunity in learning and in service to our church as we learn and live out "Here We Study", a paraphrase of Martin Luther's well-known words of "Here I stand".

Our class meets in the sanctuary on Sunday morning following the Sunday School opening gathering. During the past year the forum has studied and discussed materials encompassing bible studies, special topics such as global mission support, and forums to address congregational concerns.

In late 2008 the class began a study of Opening the Book of Faith which continued into 2009. This study began a dialogue which invites us as Christians to become fluent in the language of Scripture so that we might live our calling as a

people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word. We learned about how we read the Bible, how we learn God's Word, and how we carry this message as Lutherans into the world as we serve as messengers of the Word.

In January Pastor Bob Allard spoke about **Slovakia**, one of our METRO/DC's companion Synods.

The class then studied the **Gospel of Mark** that taught us not only about Mark but about the Acts of God as revealed in the words and works of his Son, Jesus Christ. Mark's theology is a record of history written in narrative style. We learned about and discussed Who wrote the Gospel of Mark? Who was Mark? Was he an eyewitness to events in the gospel? What was his relationship with the early Church? What is the purpose of this gospel?.

During Lent the class studied "Hope Lives" which took us on a journey of hope and prayer, exploring what Scripture really says about the poor as we discovered what keeps us from engaging in global issues or responding to God's voice as he speaks to us about poverty.

As part of the Far Team focus involving the whole church in global mission, Deena Bulick-Terry, a Bethel member who is our METRO/DC Chairperson and Global Mission contact for El Salvador, spoke to the class about her trip with Women's Study Tour to El Salvador and Mara Schleicher spoke to the class about a work trip to Papua New Guinea with her father, the bishop of the Lower Michigan Synod, and her uncle, an ELCA pastor who originally visited Papua New Guinea in his early years as a pastor.

In the fall the class began studying the Book of Acts which relates the action of the Holy Spirit who comes with power upon the believers in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and continues to guide and strengthen the church and its leaders throughout the events reported in the book. The early Christian message is summarized in a number of sermons, and the events recorded in Acts show the power of this message in the lives of the believers and in the fellowship of the church.

During Advent we studied some of Luther's sermons. Luther's intent for his sermons was to explain scripture and provide these thoughts to preachers for their use in instructing those who heard them. Luther's sermons are contemporary in thought and definition. We learned through this study that Luther's interpretations were as relevant to the age of Luther as they are to us today as they brings us not just doctrine but engage us to examine ourselves.

Here We Study - join us in our discussion and in service.

Adult Education Team members and teachers are: Pastor Jeff Wilson, Bob Schilpp, Larry Shankes, and Connie Houtz.

Fellowship & Hospitality

Prime Timers

BY: LYNN TORTORA

The Prime Timers is a fellowship group for those over 50 years old. The goal is to meet monthly for day trips, service projects and opportunities to spend time together other than Sunday mornings to better get to know one another. Many friendships have been made in this group and we become a support group for one another.

This past year we were not as active as in the past. We met for an inauguration party in January. Later in the year, we visited the new US Capitol Visitors Center, spent an evening at Wolf Trap, worked at the Thanksgiving food drive, and ended the year with a Christmas Party. Ideally, we would like to see more opportunities for fellowship in the future.

The position of chairman for the Prime Timers is currently open. If you are interested in filling this position, please contact Pastor Wilson.

Softball

BY: FAY HENRY

Our main goal for the previous softball season was to have a successful season with little injuries. Also, we wanted to get new people involved with the team. We met both goals. We had a winning season and most injuries were minor. We had four new teammates. We did not anticipate league fee increases, but the players were willing to cover all extra charges.

The softball team is an example of our mission to love God and our neighbors as ourselves. The Manassas Church Softball League provides fellowship with friendly competition between churches of many different denominations in Prince William County. Also, it provides fellowship with the members of our own church. Many team members would agree when I say we have become a family. We have met people we may not have gotten to know otherwise due to the size of our church.

If you would like to join the softball team, we will start practice in March. Look out for a signup sheet that will be posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Please contact Fay Henry at fohenry@aol.com if you have any questions. We would also like to have a bigger cheering section for this season's games. The schedule is posted weekly in the bulletin and a full schedule will also be posted on the bulletin board.

Stewardship

Introduction

BY: PASTOR JEFF WILSON

Like the Congregational Care Ministry Team, the Stewardship Team was an area of focus this year. Pastor Bob Allard worked with the relatively new Near and Far teams as these teams learned more about what “stewardship” ministries happen throughout our congregation. Over the past two years, we have defined “stewardship” more broadly by saying that ***stewardship is using our time, talent and treasure to serve the mission of Christ in the here, near and far.***

The Stewardship Ministry Team has begun making suggestions about how we use special offerings, such as the Lenten Offering. In 2009, \$5,228 was collected through Lenten Offerings, and was split between sending money to Pastor Joel Aluendo for running electricity to his church (Far), SERVE (Near), and our Youth Ministry for camps and the Youth Gathering (Here). \$549.06 was raised through Sunday School offerings for ELCA World Hunger. \$300 was raised through the Lenten Folders for SERVE.

The Stewardship Ministry Team in conjunction with the Education Ministry has begun working together to determine kid-friendly beneficiaries of Sunday School offerings. Previously, Sunday School offerings have been added to the operating income. By changing this, we hope to encourage the joy of giving as the children can see that their offerings, no matter how large or small, can join with the offerings of others to make a real difference.

Here Team

BY: PASTOR JEFF WILSON

We do not have a coordinated Here Team at this time, but we have had Here Team activities such as a session in the Adult Sunday School class on Spiritual Gifts, a Ministry Fair in the Fall, Time and Talent worksheets, and we distributed pledge cards. Building up this Ministry Team over the next year would help us better coordinate these activities.

The vision for this team is to empower all of the ministries of the church. It oversees the activities listed above, but also helps the congregation maintain the spiritual aspect of giving (time, talent and treasure) as it benefits others and each of us as we grow in faith and relationship with our Lord.

Near Team

BY: GRACE SHULTZ

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me”
(Matthew 25:40 NIV).

Goal: To spread God’s word by reaching out to the community through our actions to provide comfort and needs.

January-February - Souper Bowl Sunday. Usually Sunday School children or those from the Confirmation class dress in football uniform attire and collect donations from the congregation as they leave the service on whichever Sunday is Super Bowl day. Funds are donated to SERVE or another charity.

March - Strikes-for-SERVE Bowl-A-Thon - fundraiser for SERVE. All ages participate by forming teams of five and registering with SERVE. Once a participant, the practice is normally repeated at this fun event.

June - School’s Out Food Drive was done to provide food for children during the summer who are on free and reduced lunches during the school year. Several youth helped by sorting and bagging the food. The number of bags filled far exceeded all expectations.

August and September Back-to-School back packs and school supplies were collected. Not only were backpacks provided, but they were also FILLED with school supplies in addition to the abundance of school supplies.

October - Ministry Fair

November - Operation Turkey - Food is collected for Thanksgiving dinners for those in need in the community. Volunteers work at the distribution center sorting and packing the food for distribution.

December - Untrim-A-tree - Names of several children obtained from Social Services are placed on tags on a tree in the narthex. Each child receives two gifts from their wish list. Gifts are sorted and either delivered directly to families or to the specified distribution center.

Beacon Tree - A tree is placed in the narthex with tags to purchase books for mothers in the ESOL classes to give to their children for Christmas. These tags go quickly.

Ongoing projects are done as needs arise and are made known to us.

- Lutheran Social Services had 200 refugees arriving and in need of household items. The Near Team partnered with Beacon and their yard sale to purchase furniture, cleaning supplies, dishes, lamps, baby strollers, etc. and delivered the items to Falls Church.
- David Carr from the United Lutheran Appeal gave brief temple talks at both services May 3, 2009. He expanded on that presentation at the adult forum

following the services. The Near Team focused on highlighting one of the 13 ministries supported by the ULA each month in the Bell Tower.

- Beacon ESOL Classes - Seeds were planted that grew into a tree of knowledge for many non-English speakers in our community. Classes have increased in size and are held throughout the year.
- Lenten services provided \$300 from the Lenten folders and \$2,150 from the offerings for SERVE.
- Habitat for Humanity - some Bethel people serve in this capacity on a regular basis.
- Annual Help-the-Homeless Walk-a-Thon - November
- Established a billing system with Manassas Cab to pay for rides to SERVE when the need arises from someone dropping in at Bethel.
- Food is collected throughout the year in the grocery cart in the narthex for SERVE's food distribution center. During 2009 an average of 900 families received food per month due to the down turn of the economy.

Bethel is a very giving congregation and always rises to the occasion where there are specific needs. Thanks, Bethel!

Far Team

BY: MARA SCHLEICHER

Stewardship has been a discussion topic at Bethel for the last few years. In the summer of 2008, Pastor Jeff and Pastor Lee Ann began to have conversations with different members of Bethel and soon a Far Team was created. The Far Team has been meeting on a fairly regular basis since the fall of 2008. We believe that as Christians we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the time, talents, and treasure that God has gifted to us. The Far Team has a very large geographical area. Our projects can include anything outside of the D.C. Metro Synod area. However, we try to focus many of our projects on our three companion synods in Slovakia, Namibia, and El Salvador.

The Far Team has several goals:

1. To provide information and educational opportunities to the congregation about our companion synods
2. Recommend areas for the responsible use of monetary donations from those interested in supporting our world wide community
3. Encourage people around the world build better futures through the support of fair trade

With these goals in mind, the Far Team initiated the following programs and activities in 2009. In January, we celebrated Companion Synod Sunday focusing on Slovakia. The team sponsored youth and adult activities during the Sunday School hour and also provided information on the churches in Slovakia and our relationship with them. In February an article was written for the Bell Tower informing members where the synod sent the benevolence from our church. During the Lenten season, a portion of the Lenten offering (\$1,040) was collected and donated to Pastor Joel's congregation in Namibia to provide electricity for the church and office. The youth of Bethel also had a coin drive and collected money for the ELCA World Hunger program.

In March, we began to offer fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate for members to purchase during the coffee hour. This program started slow but has since gained in momentum. Deena Bulick-Terry also joined a Women's Study Tour to El Salvador which was sponsored by Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Augsburg College. Upon her return, Deena gave a presentation about her trip and became involved in the synod's Global Mission Committee. With the support of Pastor Bob Allard she is now the Metro-DC chairperson for the El Salvador task force.

In April and May, the team continued to support Fair Trade and began to plan for a work trip involving youth for the summer of 2010. In July, we hosted a Companion Synod Sunday focusing on Namibia as well as Fair Trade for both the youth and the adult Sunday School groups. In the fall, we participated in the Ministry Fair to help inform the congregation of the different projects we are involved in, get ideas/suggestions for future projects, and determine if anyone was interested in joining the group.

Prior to the Advent Season, Kris Hanggi, the Sunday School director, spoke with team members about designating the offering collected during Sunday School to Heifer International. To help support the cause, profits from the fair trade sales were donated to help "Fill the Stable".

Looking ahead, the Far Team has several projects that we are working on. Companion Synod Sunday focusing on Namibia will be held on January 31st. We plan to host a special coffee hour and encourage members to attend the adult Sunday School hour for a presentation from Pastor Allard on Namibia. We are also working on a Fair Trade Sunday in March which will allow members to purchase fair trade gifts. During the Lenten season, we hope to have the youth of Bethel again collect coins for World Hunger and we will continue to plan for a youth work trip for the summer.

We also hope to encourage some members of Bethel to visit one of our companion synods to help build a relationship that focuses on accompaniment. (Our bishop is planning a trip to Namibia in the fall if anyone is interested!) If anyone would like more information about the Far Team or would like to become involved you can contact any of the following team members.

Mara Schleicher - Co-chair
Connie Houtz - Co-chair
Jim Anderson

Deena Bulick-Terry
Marisa Cameron
Marnay Cameron

Art Freas
Sharon Freas
Vicki Wilson

Worship & Music Ministry

BY: CONNIE HOUTZ

*Help me to proclaim, not just with my lips and actions,
but with my whole heart and soul. May your Spirit live in me and
fill the holy word that I proclaim.*

Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, has aptly described the function of a Worship and Music ministry in the following words: "At the heart of worship is the announcement through word and sacrament that God in Christ is mercifully present for us. Around these central things there will be music and language, symbol and dance, prayers and silence that reflect the diversity of our context and rich heritage."

The Worship and Music team consists of the chair, budget manager, involvement coordinators, council liaisons, the coordinator of music ministries, vocal choir directors, bell choir directors, Dikiosis director, altar guild, lector, usher, greeter, assisting ministers and communion assistant coordinators, and other members who have interest in the music programs at Bethel.

Membership and function in this ministry team:

Pastor Jeff Wilson; Connie Houtz - Chair; Bob Schilpp - Finance Manager; Carol Blauvelt - Council Representative and secretary; Jason Largent - Interim Director of Music Ministries; John Jens - Worship and Communion Assistants; Win Lightner - Altar Guild; Deb Jacobs- Tower Ringers; Cindy Martin - Joyful Ringers (two groups); Tammy Warner - Dikiosis; Denise Lindquist - Banners; Lianetta Ruetters - Ushers; Connie Houtz - Lectors & Hymn Boards; Frank Costanza - Council Representative; Margie Preede - Member at large.

Vision - The Worship and Music Ministry Team is responsible for matters pertaining to the worship and music life of our congregation including its regular and special services and the support to provide meaningful and well planned and coordinated worship. Many aspects of the worship service are dependent on preliminary actions. Because the worship service flows so effortlessly, it may seem that little help is needed from church members to produce an effective, meaningful, and spirit-filled worship service, yet the Worship and Music Ministry Team depends on the energies and talents of not only the above representatives but also members of the individual teams as it coordinates and delivers numerous service duties. There are many ways to serve at Bethel and serving in one of the many worship and music areas is a fulfilling experience.

Accomplishments and Goals - The year 2009 was a transition year for many of the groups in this team. Worship and Music has functioned for as many years as Bethel has been incorporated as a worshiping community. The most recent reconfiguration of this team was in 2008.

2008 and 2009 were transition periods in this area of worship and music at Bethel which saw the departure of our first director of music ministries, Dr. David Montgomery. Focus forums to discuss the history of the music ministry and vision for the future were held throughout the summer of 2009. Supply musicians provided music and continuity for worship services and volunteer directors provided leadership for the children's choirs. In October, Jason Largent was welcomed as interim director of music ministries and a search team was formed to search for a new director of this ministry area. Bethel celebrated its 120th anniversary at a commemorative service in August of 2009.

During 2009 out of consideration of cost effectiveness, the transition to "in-house" worship service bulletin covers selected from a liturgical service to which Bethel subscribes was successfully effected and the team has solicited periodic "liturgical art" cover drawing submissions from artists in the congregation.

The Worship and Music team meets on a scheduled basis several times during the year to discuss service plans, calendar events, financial planning, and planning of special services and events including two training sessions in the areas of worship service.

Goals and vision are a large part of planning in this area. While maintaining the vision and liturgical practices of the ELCA, it is important to meet the needs of a changing community and meet the needs of our congregation as we serve in not only our immediate community but in service to our Lutheran church and its beliefs and outreach.

Reports from individual groups:

Interim Director of Music Ministries

As mentioned above, Bethel welcomed Jason Largent in October to fill this position. Jason has been busy spending time preparing the weekly services, planning for special services, working on choir recruitment, and organizing the church's choral library. In addition, he is also responsible for meeting with and coordinating the calendar scheduling of the various music groups in this ministry. As coordinator for these groups and as interim Director Jason, feels that, "Bethel is truly blessed by the many people who share their time and gifts to enhance our worship each week." Please consider joining and sharing your musical talents with the Bethel congregation. If you sing, play an instrument, or would like to contribute in any manner please contact either Jason Largent at jasonlargent@verizon.net, Deb Jacobs, youth choirs/adult bell director, or Cindy Martin, youth & children's bell choir director.

Dikiosis

BY: TAMMY WARNER

Dikiosis performed at numerous services at Bethel throughout the year, especially during the Lenten and Advent seasons. We were asked to perform at Our

Saviour Lutheran Church in Warrenton, VA during Lent and had a wonderful time visiting old Bethel members and meeting new Lutherans. In December, we danced again in Warrenton for the Spiritual Care Support Ministries Christmas Service and were touched by the strength of the community and the services that are offered for those who are in need in that town. We are hopeful that we will be able to continue to reach out to the community and perhaps take our dance on the road again in 2010. We are blessed to have a supportive Worship & Music Committee, pastor and Director of Music at Bethel.

Joyful Ringers

BY: CINDY MARTIN

The Joyful Ringers are hand bell choirs for children and youth in 3rd through 12th grade. All interested are welcome - no experience ringing handbells is necessary and reading music is not a requirement. With an eye toward serving in worship, these choirs work hard (but have a lot of fun) while learning the art of hand bell ringing. Our goals are to teach hand bell techniques as well as basic note and rhythm reading and to instill confidence, self-discipline, and the spirit of cooperation in each choir member. Join us as we "make a joyful noise to the Lord" through music. We rehearse weekly from 5:15 to 6:00pm (3rd -5th grade), and 6:00 to 7:00pm (6th-12th grade) and will ring in worship monthly.

One of the leadership goals for 2009 was to have an end of school year concert which was accomplished and well received. The groups also played at a retirement home. Two new quartets, composed of members from each choir, were started and they each played in church once. The desire was to play more often, but this did not happen due to time constraints for rehearsals. Towards the end of 2009 (the beginning of the new school year) we were able to extend practice times for both choirs which has helped us to be more prepared to play in church.

Goals for 2010 are to continue to play at services about once a month and to play a concert for a retirement home again. I would like for the older choir to begin challenging themselves by playing 3 octave pieces, even though we only have enough ringers for 2 octaves at this time. It means teaching some kids how to four-in-hand, weave, share bell assignments, etc... I would also like for the choirs to be able to accompany hymns from time to time during church services.

For more information, please contact Cindy Martin at cdm210@comcast.net or 703-392-5290.

Tower Ringers

BY: DEB JACOBS

The Tower Ringers are an adult hand bell group which offers praise God by bringing a variety of music to the worship service. This group participates in both worship services usually on the first Sunday of the month and in special services at

Christmas, Easter, and at annual hand bell concert in June. This group also attends an annual Virginia Handbell Festival.

In 2009 the adult bells were able to play approximately once per month including a few special services. We were also able to play in a retirement community for those that were not able to come to us. We also performed 2 concerts, one at Christmas and one in June. These concerts were not as well attended as hoped and I would like to improve on this in the next few years.

Those interested in should contact, Deb Jacobs - bobndebjacobs@comcast.net - and may also come on Monday nights to observe rehearsal.

Children's Singing Choirs

BY: DEB JACOBS

Currently two children's singing choirs are active and sing every two to three months. Rehearsals provide learning skills in singing traditional children's songs. Our goals as we build our skills in these groups is to sing in places in our surrounding community.

The Luther Choir

BY: JASON LARGENT

The Luther Choir is an adult group which sings at alternating services during the month and at special services during Advent, Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter. Our joy is in using our voices in song to provide worshipful joy and praise in our service to the Lord.

Ushers

BY: LIANETTA RUETGERS

Ushers provide service to the congregation in many ways - as congregants enter the sanctuary an usher provides not only the bulletin but greeting and welcome and assistance. There are a several regular ushers who help out every month at the 8 am or 11 am service. These are a very dedicated group of men and women. Families are welcome to usher together if they want to.

Ushering is not difficult but it is an important part of the service. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the church office, which is posted a month in advance.

Guidelines are available but a brief description is that ushers give out the bulletins before the service, take up the offering, lead the congregation in communion, pick up any trash after the service, and put the offering in the safe to be counted later.

All are welcome in service with this ministry. Training is provided. Contact Lianetta Ruetters (lianetta@comcast.net) for information.

Lectors

BY: CONNIE HOUTZ

Lectors are responsible for reading the first and second lessons in our service of worship. More importantly the lector proclaims the word of God to the gathered people. It is through the reading of the Scripture that God continues to speak. Bethel has been blessed with many people, both young and old, new and long time attendees, who are faithful and dedicated readers of the word of God.

A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board in the hallway leading to the sunroom. This includes not only Sunday services but special services for Advent, Lent, Holy Week, and other special services. Early in the year there is a training session for worship servers which provides a format for gathering to discuss areas of concern and changes that will help us better serve. Guidelines for reading and a pronunciation sheet are also located on the bulletin board.

Altar Guild

BY: WIN LIGHTNER

The altar guild supports worship through the preparation and care of the worship space and provides a setting that enables the congregation to worship in a meaningful way. Anyone, adults and teens, men and women, are welcome to help in this ministry.

Worship and Communion Assistants

BY: JOHN JENS

The mission of the church is the responsibility of all the baptized as is seen by the participation of our Assisting ministers who assist in worship in participation in the Kyrie and Hymn of Praise, the intercessory prayers, assist with Communion distribution, and participate in the Offertory and Post-Communion prayers and dismissal. Communion assistants have similar duties in participating in the distribution of the Communion.

This year our team has added many new servers in this area of worship service. Please contact John Jens at jjens@earthlink.net if you are interested in serving in this area.

Youth & Family Ministries

BY: TAMMY WARNER

Although the Senior High Youth Group did not meet regularly in 2009, 11 Senior Highs, 4 leaders and many parents worked tirelessly to help the youth group attend the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans from July 22-26, 2009. Monthly Bible studies and group meetings took place from January - July and various fundraisers were held to help raise funds for the trip. To help raise money, we worked with various restaurants and vendors, held a Spaghetti Dinner/Silent Auction/50/50 Raffle, and sponsored a huge Bethel Yard Sale. We were also very appreciative that Bethel members helped sponsor some of our youth and members gave generous donations to help make our trip successful. We were able to raise over \$16,000 and had more than enough money to make our trip a reality.

Chelsea Bulick, Molly Henry, Victoria Orta, Kayla Orta, Joseph Weschler, Lindsey Iames, Rachael Ortega, Judy Carter, Anna Improta, Luke Henry, Sheri Miller (Shepherd of the Hills member), Deena Bulick-Terry, Pastor Jeff Wilson, Dave Warner, and Tammy Warner participated in the trip. While in New Orleans, the youth were able to visit Learning Centers and Interaction Centers that the ELCA had provided for the 37,000 youth in attendance. For our Service Project, we helped sponsor a Book Fair at a local elementary school (built in the 1920's) in a New Orleans neighborhood with another church from Pennsylvania. We set up the book fair, served food, led a puppet show, cake walk, craft table, face painting, and helped kids shop for books. The youth loved working with the kids and felt like they were able to help this community and give some hope to those who dropped by. We took a four-hour tour of New Orleans, which was lead by a family member of Lindsey Iames. We were able to see all the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina, including the 9th Ward, which was still so desolate and eerie. We took a boat ride on the sweltering bayou while listening to some Cajun history and even got to hold a baby alligator, which was cool for most of the group. At night, we attended the large group activities in the Superdome and listened to bands/musicians, guest speakers, and performers. Social activities were available at night and all the youth loved dancing and participating in the various activities and games. We walked the streets of New Orleans taking in the sights, ate in many local restaurants and loved talking to the local New Orleans people. We found that every person had a hurricane story and the people of New Orleans are humble and most loving and welcoming. The people of New Orleans were also very appreciative of all the help the youth of ELCA provided to their city (this was the largest group that had gathered in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina) and thanked us tremendously all week.

We held a New Orleans presentation/dinner in August for Bethel members and our families and fed everyone some New Orleans cuisine. We showed our pictures and shared our stories and everyone shared their personal experiences. The trip was a huge success and it was great to see the youth in a different element; I know that the youth now see "Jesus, Justice, Jazz" in a different light.

On another note, Bob & Pam Shon and Dave & Tammy Warner led a Senior High Retreat to Caroline Furnace in March, a Game Night in September, and a Food Drive for SERVE in November. Janice Improta took a group to the International Spy Museum in the fall and Debbie Donahue took a group to the 4-H Center for Chrysalis, the Senior High DC Synod Retreat in December.

For 2010, we are very proud to have Anna Improta represent the youth by being elected and serving on the 2010 Church Council. We are hopeful that she will have a good experience and will be helpful in giving a youthful perspective on current matters and Bethel matters. The Shons & Warners will be heading up Cabaret and working with the youth in January/February 2010. We are hoping to get more Bethel members involved in this fun event and build some fellowship.

The Senior Highs would be a beneficial group for our high school youth to participate in to help build relationships with others and God, and to help provide service to our church and community, but due to lack of leadership, no regular schedule is present at Bethel at this time and former leaders and parents do not want to take responsibility for the sole leadership of this group. There are many youth that want a regular youth program and our church is growing, it is recommended that we pursue hiring a Youth Director in 2010.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tammy Warner