



THE BETHANIA BLADE

“As a called people of God and as members of Bethania,
we will grow in our faith and share it with others”

September/ October 2025



*D*ear People of Bethania,

On August 14, Pastor Jonathan Barker of Grace Lutheran in Kenosha (where I was Interim Pastor in 2003-04) planned to give a sermon endorsing Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for President in 2028. He knew this crossed the line of the Johnson Amendment, prohibiting non-profit groups from endorsing political candidates, so he consulted Bishop Erickson in advance. The Bishop advised him that he could anticipate consequences for such actions, so Pastor Barker instead resigned as pastor and gave his last sermon on August 14 at a non-church, neutral site. For the members of Grace who didn't attend that last sermon, they met with Bishop Erickson for worship that Sunday morning. The Bishop also followed it up a couple days later with a Pastoral Letter to the entire Synod, explaining what had happened and asking that we hold the people of Grace in our prayers.

But the significance of these events continue to push beyond the original incident. By August 19, *The New York Times* did a substantial article not only on the Kenosha particulars but also on the wider issue of the Johnson Amendment. I was among responders to the Bishop's letter requesting a synod event(s) to hold conversations around these issues. I do not agree with the timing of Pastor Barker's choice to endorse a candidate for 2028, but I do wonder if I will feel compelled to endorse candidates when the time comes in 2026 or 2028. I feel these are extraordinary times in which we might lose our democracy to a fascist takeover. When the Rule of Law itself is in danger, is it time to consider breaking a law such as the Johnson Amendment?

I should take a short moment to make sure everyone knows what the Johnson Amendment is, as well as its status of enforcement. It's named after then-Senator Lyndon Johnson for an Amendment in 1954 to I.R.S. law, prohibiting non-profit organizations who are tax-exempt from endorsing political candidates. Such organizations *can* endorse issues but not specific candidates, or the I.R.S. can revoke the organization's tax-exempt status. But the history of the law is that it's never enforced. In fact, it's another area in which there's a great divide between mainline churches and many conservative churches. The conservative churches routinely break the rule, and mainline churches (like the ELCA) choose to abide by it.

With our democracy at stake, I feel strongly that we need to have serious conversations about how we live out our faith as citizens in these precarious times – which I'm pleased to say that Bishop Erickson has agreed to convene this Fall (details forthcoming). ELCA Pastor Clint Schneklath, who has long been a primary voice for progressive Lutherans, wrote two "Substack" essays on the issues which Pastor Barker's actions raise. Commenting on theologian Richard Niebuhr's reflections on Christ and culture, he writes,

My understanding, closer to Christ-in-culture or Christ-transforming-culture, would say: yes, of course the kingdom of God is not entirely here, but in the meantime, part of Christian responsibility is to try to live that kingdom now. That means there are better and worse laws, better and worse candidates, and better and worse political parties. This doesn't mean any one party is the kingdom of God, but it does mean that Christ in the world looks more like this than that.

I write this column seeking to include all of you in the conversation. I've already spoken to Council President Jeff Alderson about devoting some time to the matter at the September 8 Council meeting. As always, you are welcome to attend. Please don't hesitate to call, or to make an appointment with me, to raise any questions or concerns you have about these things. And be sure to come to worship this Fall, as we continue to hear the Good News of God's gift economy.

Peace, Pastor Paul

Date	Communion Assistant	Reader	Building host, offering & cross	Coffee Hour	Altar Flowers
September 7	Jeff Alderson & Brad Larsen	Anne Woodward	Brad Larsen		
September 14	Jeff & Calaway Alderson	Calaway Alderson	Jeff Alderson	Picnic	Anne Woodward
September 21	John & Robin Barnes	John Barnes	John Barnes		Cathi Webster
September 28	Julie Hansen & Vicki Thiery	Vicki Thiery	Ed Young		Jane Spencer
October 5	Kelly Imhoff & Jerod Alderson	Kelly Imhoff	Kelly Imhoff		
October 12	Brad Larsen & Jeff Alderson	Anita Nielsen	Brad Larsen	Altar Guild	
October 19	Jeff & Calaway Alderson	Jeff Alderson	Jeff Alderson		
October 26 Reformation Day	John & Robin Barnes	Robin Barnes	John Barnes		

September & October Scripture Readings



Date	First Reading	Second Reading	Gospel
September 7	Deuteronomy 30:15-20	NONE	Luke 14:25-33
September 14	Exodus 32:7-14	NONE	Luke 15:1-10
September 21	Amos 8:4-7	NONE	Luke 16:1-13
September 28	Amos 6:1a, 4-7	NONE	Luke 16:19-31
October 5	2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c	NONE	Luke 17:11-19
October 12	Genesis 32:22-31	NONE	Luke 18:1-8
October 19	Amos 5: 6-7	NONE	Luke 18:18-30
October 26	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Romans 3:19-30	John 8:31-36

September Birthdays

9/2 – Bill Krause

9/4 – Cassie Vassar

9/4 – Kurtis Webster

9/8 – Calaway
Alderson

9/8 – Camren McIntosh

9/8 – Brittany McIntosh

9/14 – Sara Hagerman

9/14 – Dakota Kechter

9/17 – Anne Woodward

9/19 -



October Birthdays

10/5 Ripley McGaughey

10/9 Jean Dragan

10/12 – Eli Imhoff

10/13 – Marilyn
Peterson

10/18 – Andrew Drasen



September Anniversaries

September 19 – Jeff & Shelly Alderson

September 30 – Jim & Sharon Leger

October Anniversaries

10/04 – Dan & Sara Hagerman

10/17 – Tom & Vicki Thiery

Racine Collective Book Club

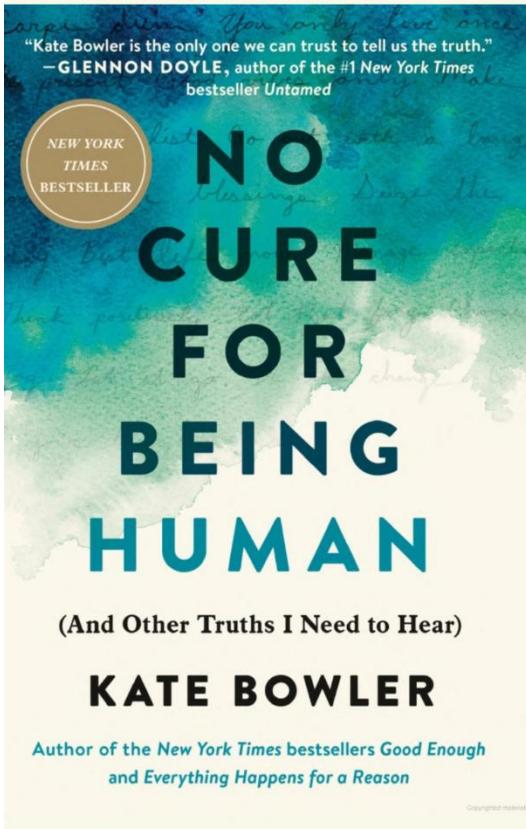


1pm: The Inclusive Bean

1930 Albert St.

6pm: United Lutheran

3825 Erie St.



Sept 10: Preface,
Ch 1 & 2

Sept 17: Ch 3 & 4

Sept 24: Ch 5

Oct 1: No Meeting

Oct 8: Ch 6

Oct 15: Ch 7

Oct 22: Ch 8

Oct 29: Ch 9 & 10



Bethania Lutheran Church

4120 Wright Avenue

Racine, WI 53405

262-632-7267

bethania@wi.twcbc.com

Reverend Paul Nuechterlein, Pastor
Cathi Webster, Administrative Assistant
William Mueller, Church Musician

Council: Jeff Alderson (President), Kelly
Imhoff (Vice President), Ed Young
(Treasurer), Cathi Webster (Secretary),
Brad Larsen (Property), Shelly Alderson,
and John Barnes



2025 Church Picnic

Sunday, September 28, 2025

**Following the worship
in the Hearth room.**

Bring a dish to pass.

Sandwiches and drinks provided

**BETHANIA HOSTS COMMUNITY MEAL
ON SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 7, 2025 @ 4 PM
AT LIVING FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
2915 Wright AVENUE RACINE**

IF YOU CAN HELP PLEASE SEE JEFF OR SHELLY





RECONCILED IN CHRIST

Being reconciled to Christ in a Christian context means being restored to a right relationship with God through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This reconciliation, initiated by God, eliminates the barrier of sin that separated humanity from Him, allowing people to live in a close, peaceful relationship with God, forgiven and renewed.

Key Aspects of Reconciliation to Christ

- **A Broken Relationship:**

The term "reconciliation" means to restore a severed or damaged relationship. Because of sin, humanity was estranged from God, described as enemies of God.

- **God's Initiative:**

God, in His grace, provided the way for reconciliation. He didn't wait for humanity to act but sent Jesus to bring about the solution.

- **Christ's Sacrifice:**

Through Jesus' death on the cross, God's judgment was satisfied, and the means to bridge the gap between God and humanity was established.

- **Forgiveness and New Life:**

Reconciliation involves the forgiveness of sins, not counting human offenses against them, and provides total absolution and spiritual purification.

- **A New Relationship:**

Those who believe in Christ are reconciled to God and become His beloved children, united in an intimate relationship with Him.

- **The Ministry of Reconciliation:**

Believers are not only reconciled to God but also given the message and ministry of reconciliation, invited to share this message with others.

In essence, being "reconciled to Christ" is to be brought into a right, restored, and permanent relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ



Bethania is a community rooted in faith and strengthened through generations. Founded by Danish immigrants, our story begins with a resilient spirit, a deep commitment to worship, and a strong sense of fellowship.

Today, we honor that legacy by growing in faith, service and love – welcoming all who seek belonging, purpose and spiritual growth. We embrace people of every race, age, culture, socioeconomic background, sexual and romantic orientation, gender identity and expression, ability, neurotype, relationship status, citizenship or immigration status and life experience.

Are you weary from the weight of life's journey? There is a space for you here. At Bethania, you are invited to the communion table to share in the bread and wine, just as you are invited to the table for aebleskivers and lingonberry jam – a sign of our hospitality and joy. This is a place to be present in His presence. Welcome home.



Jeff O., Bonnie, Anita, Grete L., Bettie, Tom N., Jim & Sharon L., Ingaborg, Robin B., Pat, Heather, Wesley, Kurtis, Debbie M., Ava, Brad, Mike I. , Tracy





On July 31, 2025 Ava Leger became a US Navy Sailor. This picture is from her Pass and Review after being congratulated by her family who she hadn't seen in 8 weeks.

Her liberty and family time was short as her next duty assignment was for A School in Texas where she will be studying nursing.



Please make the following changes to your directories:

Dennis & Jean Dragen,

1100 Fountain Hills Drive #138C

Racine, WI 53406

Also remove their Florida address as they are in the process of selling it and will be staying in Racine year round.

CARE AND CONCERN LIST

Please consider sending a sending a note of encouragement to someone on this list. These are people who are dealing with challenges of health, mobility and other challenges.

JOYCE THOMSEN

2935 Old Mill Drive
Racine, WI 53405

262-632-5678

GRETE LOSCHENKOHL

Ascension Living

- St Francis Place

3200 S. 20th Street

Room 101

Milwaukee, WI 53215

MARILYN PETERSON

Pleasant Pointe
Assisted Living

8500 Corporate Dr.

#403

Racine, WI 53406

262-898-3239

TOM NIELSEN

Prospect Heights

2015 Prospect St.

Racine, WI 53404



An Invitation from Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church:

Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church (MPLC) officially became an independent congregation on April 29, 1956 after nine years as a “daughter church” to Racine’s Atonement Lutheran Church. At that time, the congregation gathered in an older church building first constructed in 1858 at the southwest corner of Green Bay Road and Plank Road (current location of Denny’s Restaurant and Midas), an intersection that was known locally as Mygatt’s Corners.

In June of 1972, MPLC voted to purchase property on the southwest corner of 16th St. and Highway 31 on which to build a new church building. After selling and moving from the Mygatt’s Corners Church, and while the new church building was being constructed, the congregation held worship services at neighboring congregation Bethania Lutheran Church (4120 Wright Ave) for over a year. Construction began in September of 1974. In September 1975, MPLC moved into the current sanctuary, which was officially dedicated on November 9, 1975.

We're having a 50th celebration service on September 14, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., and an indoor picnic following the service and we'd like to invite the congregation of Bethania to join us!



RACINE CHURCHMEN'S CLUB

Meets at Asian Buffet -3701 Durand Avenue, Racine, WI 53405
The first Friday of Every month at 11:30 a.m.
Lunch and program – Adjourns at 1:30 p.m.

Est. 1937

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection Car show and Festival



No Entry Fee – Food Truck –

Live Bands – Family Friendly Activities

Sunday, September 14, 2025 -11 am to 3:00 p.m.

322 Ohio Street – Racine, WI 53405

www.LCRRACINE.org



September 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Thread by Thread OPEN	4	5	6
7 9:30 worship 10:30 coffee hour	8	9 7:00 Council mtg	10 1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	11	12	13
14 9:30 worship Mt Pleasant 50 th Celebration	15	16	17 Thread by Thread OPEN 1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	18	19	20
21 9:30 worship 10:30 coffee hour	22	23	24 1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	25	26	27
28 9:30 worship 10:30 Church picnic	29	30				

October 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Thread by Thread OPEN1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	2	3	4
5 9:30 worship 10:30 coffee hour	6	7	8 1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	9	10	11
12 9:30 worship 10:30 coffee hour	13	14	15 Thread by Thread OPEN1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	16	17	18
19 9:30 worship 10:30 coffee hour	20	21	22 1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	23	24	25
26 9:30 worship 10:30 coffee hour	27	28	29 1 pm Book club ,Inclusive bean 6 p book club United	30	31	

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