

## Just the Facts...

When speculating about Bethany and comparing current trends with historical perspectives, it's helpful to have more facts and less conjecture. For this reason, "Just the Facts..." will become a regular article in the Business of Bethany. If there is a "fact" that you've been conjecturing about recently, please submit a "fact request" to [joel@bethany-denver.org](mailto:joel@bethany-denver.org) and he'll do his best to gather "just the facts."

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	YTD 2009
Baptisms	119	111	80	57	71	43	35
Weddings	36	22	16	28	17	16	9
Funerals	30	22	25	21	23	31	14
New Members	240	133	98	131	89	106	53
Confirmations	40	52	27	43	33	37	0
Transfers Out	72	99	56	99	59	49	22
Wkly Worship	1,074	993	929	960	951	918	872*

\*More heavily weighted to summer attendance as it only includes attendance through July 2009.

*(The Joys of Membership continued from page 3)*

**Stewardship:** In the Old Testament, God told his people that he expected them to give back 10% of their possessions. In the New Testament, Jesus asks his followers to give up everything (100%). Let's stick to the 10% tithe. How much of your income in 2008 was given to the work of the Lord, either at Bethany or elsewhere? If you gave at least 10%, you have done your part. If not, challenge yourself to do better in 2009.

The church today needs each and every one of us, as individuals and households, to be faithful to our calling. Please continue to review the gifts of your membership at Bethany from the spiritual, relational, and stewardship perspectives.

Our theology of stewardship dictates that Christians give in response to what God has first given us - his Son - priceless!

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from a person who was not a member of Bethany. This gift had no designation and we have no information about the family or their connection to Bethany. In a situation like this, it is the Council's responsibility to determine the appropriate use of the gift. To date, we have received a preliminary disbursement of \$100,000 and expect a similar amount to be disbursed to Bethany upon final settlement of the estate later this year.

## The Financial Law

If you are more of a "law-oriented" or "Old Testament" Lutheran and need a "rule of thumb," the following fact may help put your financial support in perspective:

To achieve the \$2.1 million budget in 2009/10, Bethany needs each of the 1,289 active households to give at least \$1,629 to the General Fund. If you assume 25% of the active members are really not active and don't participate in the life of the church in any way, this amount increases to \$2,172 per active household.

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sub-team to look at upgrades to the Sanctuary sound system as the existing system has critical components that are now more than 20 years old. The new regulatory requirements regarding wireless technology require that we upgrade this portion of the system by the end of the year.

# The BUSINESS of BETHANY

A Quarterly Newsletter from Bethany Administration



Third Quarter 2009

## Founders Campaign Update

Our current debt load is \$2.6 million. Through August 2, 2009, we have received \$170,000 in contributions for 2009. With this amount, combined with part of the recent bequest Bethany has received, we are hoping to make a significant pre-payment in September pending Council approval. **If you are able to make your 2009 contribution sooner rather than later, this will help us realize additional savings to support additional needs at Bethany.**

## Bequest Update

Among the sources of income for Bethany are bequests from people who name Bethany in their will. Typically, these gifts are designated for a particular purpose or there is a surviving spouse or other family member who will be involved in determining the designation. We were recently notified of a significant bequest

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## Six-month Budget Summary

We received \$943k in the first six months of 2009 versus the budget of \$1,000,000. Fortunately, we were able to manage expenditures to \$948k so that our loss for the six-month transitional budget was \$5k. The expenditures for this period included all of the personnel and restructuring costs associated with both planned and unplanned changes due to the challenging budget process for the 2009/10 fiscal year.

## July Results

Our new fiscal year started on July 1, 2009. The month of July is typically a "low" month for financial contributions. This year was certainly not an exception to this rule. We received only \$112k versus the budget of \$135k. The leadership, pastors and the Stewardship Ministry Team will be discussing actions to take in response to this shortfall to (hopefully) close the gap as quickly as possible this fall. Please keep Bethany and the leadership in your prayers.

## Budget Meeting Summary

The first-ever annual business meeting of the congregation was held on May 17, 2009 to approve the budget for the 2009/10 fiscal year (from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). The meeting was attended by nearly 200 Bethany members.

The meeting began with Doug Aldrich, President of the Congregation, reviewing the process that was used by Council and staff to develop the budget and provide opportunities for input from the congregation. The budget recommendation from Council was then presented. During this presentation, a question was asked about the use of Bethany Foundation funds to help the church with certain expenses. Further discussion on this matter was tabled until formal discussion regarding the budget.

Next, Pastors Ron and Ruth Ann provided an overview of the Mission, Vision, Goals and the program plan for 2009/10. Ron Bruggeman pro-

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## Personnel Changes/ Updates

Since the last Business of Bethany we have said “good bye” to Pastor Patrice Von Stroh and Kirsten Nelson Roenfeldt and welcomed Pastor Paul Gilbertson as a part-time Visitation Pastor. Paul is currently available 7-12 hours per week to help with hospital and shut-in visits. He is a familiar presence at Bethany as he was one of our Interim Pastors following the resignation of Pastor Wayne.

In August, we look forward to welcoming Caitlin Trussel as our Pastoral Intern. She will work with Pastors Ron and Ruth Ann on a wide variety of pastoral responsibilities including worship leadership, pastoral care and confirmation.

As of this writing, we are in the process of discussing the potential for a partnership with Covenant Village of Colorado to enhance our health and wellness ministry at Bethany. The Health and Wellness Cabinet has been working for over a year on a job description for a staff person that could lead and implement the vision of the HWC. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Molly Sullivan has been our Youth Intern this summer. She will extend her work at Bethany through the month of September to help with program planning and kick-off events.

*(Budget Meeting Summary continued from page 1)*

vided a response from the Stewardship Ministry Team regarding the stewardship challenge we face at Bethany during these difficult economic times.

A motion was then made to approve the \$2.1 million budget as presented. Discussion followed including a revised motion to table the budget decision and form a committee to review and evaluate all possible options for the budget. The amended motion was allowed to be heard, discussed and voted on. By a show of hands, the revised amendment was defeated 123-18. Written ballots were then distributed to vote on the original motion to approve budget. The budget was approved by a vote of 145 in favor, 41 opposed and 4 abstentions.

### Editorial:

Upon reflection of the budget process, the most significant highlight was the level of involvement of our church members. The typical budget process at Bethany has not accomplished such a high level of participation and dialog among our members. For the most part, it was healthy and productive. I would hope that this will continue. Thank you to everyone who was able to productively engage in the process despite different perspectives and opinions.

## The Joys of Membership

Perhaps one of the reasons we run into challenges in the church, both Bethany and elsewhere, is that we tend to be shy about the expectations of membership. The Bible is clear about the expectations and responsibilities of a Christian, but it becomes difficult to interpret those expectations for ourselves and our relationship with each other and our church.

**Spiritual:** As Christians, we need to participate in daily prayer, regular worship and study of the Bible. Bethany offers many opportunities for spiritual Faith Formation for all ages to “equip and empower” each of us for service, worship, and witness in the world. Do you attend worship regularly? Do you participate in a weekly Bible study or attend a class on Sundays or Wednesdays? Have you ever

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Dear Uncle BOB-

In my last letter, the question was asked “who is going to bell the cat?” Since I wrote that letter I have been scurrying around Bethany to see if any one has the appropriate set of “gifts” to “bell the cat”.

I am happy to report that one of my fellow church mice stepped up to do so, and we are now getting used to the bell on the cat. It’s a change that wasn’t easy to accomplish, but it had to happen so we could realize our goal of having an early warning system to know when the cat was nearby.

In this same way, Bethany has a set of goals that are part of what we call MVG – or Mission, Vision and Goals. Changes have to happen so that we can accomplish these goals, and many of my fellow mice have stepped up in a number of ways to “bell the cat” by starting new programs, reaching out and inviting others to join in, or volunteering for leadership roles. It’s great to be a (small) part of such a vibrant and dynamic church.

See you in church!

P.S. Stayed tuned for my next letter when I switch gears from “bell the cat” to “smell the rat”. Should be good...

*(The Joy of Membership continued from page 2)*

prayed for Bethany and its members? If so, keep doing it. If not, take advantage of the many opportunities to get involved now and in the weeks and months ahead. Start out simple with a daily prayer routine!

**Relationship:** We are all working for the Lord through our community of faith at Bethany. Some of us are responsible for teaching, preaching and ministries of the church; others are responsible for the financial wellbeing; still others are interested in specific programs –such as music, youth, senior programs, etc. As one body of Christ, we must treat each other with respect and dignity while allowing for constructive debate and disagreement. We are expected to be *available* to each other, *affirming* of each other and *authentic* with each other.

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## Facilities Update

The Facilities Team remains busy with a number of projects at all stages of completion. The courtyard landscaping project continues as the team considers a suitable “barrier” on the west end of the courtyard to soften the view and minimize the impact of the “rock garden” at that end. Initially, the landscaping plan included a row of shrubs and a brick wall on the west edge. However, this has proven not to be a workable solution due to the structure underneath and lack of soil depth for planting purposes. Other options are now being considered.

The upper-most, west-facing windows in the Sanctuary have been tinted to help minimize the impact of the setting sun during late afternoon/early evening events throughout the year. This option was selected over a number of other considerations due to the ease of installation, minimal impact to the physical structure and cost. If this option proves workable, other windows may be considered for tinting as well.

We have started to ask for bids for roof, parking lot and concrete replacement. These are the high priority projects from the Capital Improvement Plan for Bethany. In addition, we are forming a

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