

2017 Annual Report to the Membership of Bethesda Evangelical Covenant Church

Bethesda Church Staff - 2017

David W. Lindfors

Senior Pastor

Anthony Clerkin

Director of Christian Education

Shari Sulser

Assistant to the Director
of Christian Education

Paul Stalter

Contemporary Service Worship Leader

Steve Weigle

Custodian

Heather Clerkin

Communications Director
Secretary

Ron Anderson

Organist

Bethesda Church Leadership Team - 2017

Cheryl Waak, Chair
Dick Diller, Vice Chair
Melanie Tack, Secretary
Pastor Dave Lindfors

Monica Michael
Jeff Berg
Matt Carlson
Anthony Clerkin

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Letter from the President of the Central Conference

Christmas greetings, friends. December reminds us that the calendar year is drawing to a close, and so I want to thank you deeply for your support for this partnership. You are one of more than 850 Covenant congregations with our 11 regional conferences across the United States and Canada, and in more than 40 additional countries, this pretty obscure fellowship has sought to follow the heart of God into the world. Together, we are impacting millions of lives.

Not only has God worked through your congregation, God has used your congregation's partnership with your regional conference and the Covenant as a whole. Here and around the world God is being worshiped, people are finding new life in Christ, disciples are being formed, new churches are being planted, existing churches are hungry for God's fruitful future, pastors and lay leaders are being poured into, and we join God in seeking to make things rights in a broken and hurting world. Yes, we continue to be a growing, multigenerational, multi-ethnic fellowship, living a simple rhythm of going deeper in Christ and further in mission. So let's stay 3StrandStrong: congregation, conference, Covenant. Pray. Engage. Serve.

Finally, a personal word. This is my last Christmas in this office, I will be retiring next summer after 10 years as president, and 42 years altogether of Covenant ministry. The Covenant is where I came to faith as a high school student. It is the community that continually nurtured my own growth as a follower of Christ, and that of my family. It is the church whose dedication to do God's mission has been so central to my own vocation. Thank you for the honor of serving you, and thank you for helping to make the Covenant the special fellowship that it is. This Christmas, you are God's gift to me, as you have been from the very beginning of my journey with Christ.

Season's Blessings,

Gary B. Walter, President

Letter from the Superintendent of the Central Conference

Greetings Central Conference Churches and Friends!

Hello Saints of the Central Conference!

Can you believe December is here? The Central Conference staff wishes you the best during this Advent season, as we wait in expectation and hope the arrival of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are busy preparing for 2018. Many great surprises are coming. We ask that you continue to pray with us as we discern the direction of our conference. We want to be connecting, fully participating and contributing to the mission of the church.

May God allow us all to see the wonders and goodness of his grace as we celebrate Jesus being born.

Blessings to you!

Danny Martinez

Central Conference Superintendent

Conference News

TRANSITION NEWS: Several nominating committees are underway for senior leadership positions in the ECC. Nominees are anticipated to be identified sometime in the early second quarter of 2018 in time for action by respective governing bodies leading up to the Covenant Annual Meeting in June. These include for the president of the ECC, president of North Park University, executive minister for Develop Leaders/Ordered Ministry, and superintendents for the Canada and Southeast conferences. Watch the Covenant Newswire for developments.

MISSION UPDATES

Start and Strengthen Churches: We are encouraged by record attendance at two November events! Our Navigate Conference welcomed a record 29 churches with a total attendance of 156 people. And our most recent Church Planter Training Intensive hosted 46 people. We praise God for the movement of the Holy Spirit among us, and we ask you to join us in prayer for continued fruitfulness!

Serve Globally: Covenant World Relief recently approved six new community development projects: women's vocational training in DR Congo; youth education and violence reduction in Mexico; community well in Haiti; rescue from human trafficking in India; care for Syrian refugees in Lebanon; and transformation of students and adults through two community centers in east Asia.

Make and Deepen Disciples: We are pleased to announce the 2018 Week of Prayer entitled "Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water: An Invitation to Practice Prayer in Ordinary Life." This resource is flexible and can be used by individuals or groups. In 2018, we invite you to go deeper in Christ and further in mission through prayer.

Ministry Teams - 2017

Adult Education

Delinda Grindle
Linda Parker
Kevin Polky
Paul Bengtson

Alley Walk

Shirley Hacker

bYg Youth Ministries

Anthony Clerkin
Shari Sulser

Children's Ministries

Anthony Clerkin
Heather Clerkin
Shari Sulser
Jan Lindfors
Joy Vee

Communion

Steve Weigle

Creative Team

Heather Clerkin

Financial

Rob Grindle
Cathy Frondal, Treasurer
Carol Folkerts, Treasurer
Char Polky

Congregational Care

Wealtha Helland, Chair
Judy & Randy Carlson
Anne & Jim Grindle
Linda Parker
Paul Stalter
David Wood

Connections

Linda Parker, Chair
*First Impressions Team:
list of those who served
is on p. 16*

HeartPrints

Judy Carlson
Donna Crews
Carl Fredrickson
Robin Fredrickson
Delinda Grindle, Chair
Wealtha Helland
Doris Johnson
Linda Parker
Marcia Stalter
Joy Vee
Nancy West

Hospitality

Doris Johnson
Donna Crews

Integration Team

Judy Carlson, Chair
Jim Campobello
Robin Fredrickson
Anne Grindle
Marcia Stalter

Missions

Jim Campobello
Carol Folkerts
Don Hacker
Shirley Hacker
Gene Swanson
Nancy West
J. David Wood

Mutual Ministry

Joy Vee
Jeri Gilmore
Dick Diller

Nominating

Mike West
Don Ramboldt
Michele Ticknor
Dave Lindfors

Nursery

Cheryl Bengtson
Shari Sulser

Prayer

Paul Bengtson
Cheryl Bengtson
Randy Theien

Prayer Chain

Heather Clerkin

Women Ministries

Sandy Berg
Judy Carlson
Heather Clerkin
Donna Crews
Carol Folkerts
Cheryl Waak

Worship Band

Paul Stalter
Andy Strong
Dave Lindfors
Aiden Tack
Paul Karvelius
Heather Clerkin
Celia Strong
Dawn Hallsten
Phil Sulser

Worship Planning

Marcia Stalter, Chair
Andy Strong
Ron Anderson
Dave Lindfors
Joanne Plett
Mark Joy
Delinda Grindle
Nancy West
Paul Stalter
Heather Clerkin

Video

Heather Clerkin
Mason Stalter
Aaron Tack
Lisa Strong
Aiden Tack

The Core Values of Bethesda Covenant Church

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE: We believe that Bethesda Covenant Church must be committed to a culture of excellence to honor God and inspire others.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT: We believe that Bethesda Covenant Church must be culturally relevant while remaining biblically sound in order to reach every generation with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

UNCONDITIONALLY LOVING AND INCLUSIVE: We believe that Bethesda Covenant Church must be unconditionally loving and inclusive so that every person we touch feels welcomed, received, and valued.

GROWING IN CHRIST: At Bethesda Covenant Church, we believe in the importance of the whole-hearted pursuit of God's presence. Through heartfelt worship, dynamic small groups, committed community service, and in every other aspect of our lives together we aspire to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

UNIQUE GIFTS WORKING TOGETHER: At Bethesda Covenant Church, we believe that every member of the Body of Christ has unique spiritual gifts that should be respected and honored, and that when used together, these gifts will effectively build the kingdom of God.

AUTHENTICITY: At Bethesda Covenant Church, we believe in the importance of being authentic in our Christian walk so that all will know that we are real people who are in the process of being transformed by the love of Jesus Christ.

STEWARDSHIP: At Bethesda Covenant Church, we believe in the responsible and careful use of our resources that God may be glorified. In everything, including the contribution of time, talent, testimony, and treasure, we believe in the importance of giving generously and managing attentively what God makes available to us.

Guidelines For Gracious Relationships

We, the Friends and Members of Bethesda Covenant Church Seek to...

- 1. Communicate with clarity, honesty and love.*
- 2. Be patient and forgiving, slow to criticize and quick to affirm.*
- 3. Trust, encourage, and respect our pastors and leaders.*
- 4. Be gentle and kind, respecting each other in all that we say and do.*
- 5. Honor different gifts, histories, outward appearances, and journeys.*

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SENIOR PASTOR

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" Psalm 51:10 (RSV)



Since annual reports are notorious for not being read, I thought that I would include it in the December newsletter. I also decided to include a cartoon that might expand my readership a bit as I write my last annual report here at Bethesda. The cartoon above, taken from "Today's Pastor" magazine, is interesting in that cartoons of this nature, and with its basic message appear with regularity in clergy periodicals. When we clergy types see them, we smile because they are funny, and they are funny because there is undeniable truth within them.

Bethesda Covenant Church is on the threshold of many changes. Whether or not the changes will be transforming is going to be dependent on a number of things, but primarily on the condition of our hearts. Heart change and heart transformation is a prominent subject in both the Old and New Testaments. The prophet Ezekiel first talks about heart transformation in chapter 11, verse 19, but then comes back to heart change in Ezekiel 36:26 which reads...

*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;
I will remove from you your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh."*

The encouraging part of this text is that God is able and ready to make our hearts soft and pliable. He is committed to helping us to become more and more the people he has called us to be. The catch is that we have to want change and transformation, for he will not force it upon us. This is a huge deal because many times, we are willing to change everything but our hearts.

If we think it will get us ahead, we will change worship service times and formats. We will change the structure of Christian Education, adult ministries, church governance, staff and nearly anything else.

We are willing to work our fingers to the bone, attempting to manage our way to church prosperity, however we define that, with any number of external changes.

But while good management is important, it is not, I repeat not transforming. Real change only happens when it happens in our hearts, and spirits, and in the culture of our church. It is my prayer as I write this last annual report that we here at Bethesda would be open in a new way to the transforming power of God in our hearts and spirits, and church culture. Trying to simply rely on other changes just isn't going to cut it.

I would humbly suggest that one of the God honoring heart changes that could make a profound difference here is a church-wide change of heart toward the unsaved and unchurched. We are one year into a movement toward intentional evangelism that has the potential to transform Bethesda.

In the six months that I have left to serve you, I intend to continue to work toward organic outreach, where evangelism is not just the responsibility of a committee, but is a part of every function of our church. We have talked about, and will continue to hold up the BLESS INITIATIVE, where we can learn to impact friends and neighbors by B – Beginning with prayer, L – Listening with care, E – Eating together, S – Serving thoughtfully, and S – Sharing our stories.

I am planning to bring other teaching and tools as well to better equip us to influence our world for Jesus Christ. I would like very much to lead in this area, and hopefully there will be followers. (You know what they say: A leader without followers is just a person out taking a walk).

As with all heart change, caring about our friends and neighbors who are far from God requires a re-allocation of our time, resources, and priorities, both personally and in the life of our church. The big question is whether or not we will be willing to let God change us.

As I close this final report, I want to express my gratitude for being able to be your pastor for the last 18 years. I also want to express my gratitude to all of the people of Bethesda that I have had the privilege of working beside these many years. I am exceeding thankful for my family, and most of all my wife Jan who has been my partner in ministry from the beginning.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. David W. Lindfors
Senior Pastor: Bethesda Covenant Church

PASTOR'S STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Membership, December 31, 2015. 321
Membership, December 31, 2016 318
Membership, December 31, 2017. 305

BAPTISMS

May 28 Levi Gregg Johnson, Son of Melissa & Brandon Johnson, born 4/27/16
Sept.24 Kelsey Rae Fort, daughter of Sara & Jeff Fort, born 7/26/17
Oct. 15 Quinn Grace Carlson, daughter of Matt & Leah Carlson, born 1/20/17
Oct. 22 Ainsleigh Olivia LiCausi, daughter of John & Nikki LiCausi, born 4/13/17
Dec. 24 RoLynn Jeane Ingle, daughter of Anna & ?? Ingle, born 7/8/17

FUNERALS/MEMORIAL SERVICES (Members)

Muriel Boyd	Rev. David Lindfors, Officiating
Lovae Wiegner	Rev. David Lindfors, Officiating
Vickie Carlson	Rev. David Lindfors, Officiating
Cal Gustafson	
Shirley Peterson	
Lester Fernstaedt	
Harriet Julin	Rev. David Wood, Officiating
John Cederstrom	Rev. David Wood, Officiating

WEDDINGS

March 8	Brittney Julin	Married in St. Pete Beach, FL
July 22	Kristin Frondal	Rev. Dave Lindfors, Officiating

Christian Education Department

Anthony Clerkin - Director of Christian Education

We've had another banner year in the CE department at Bethesda Covenant!

This year we baptized five children, confirmed two fine young men and celebrated as three students celebrated the sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time!

The Little Ones

Four babies were born into our church family this year. Our nursery continues to provide a safe, engaging atmosphere for our babies. Our team of dedicated volunteers provide a positive first impression of church for these, our smallest family members. Through play, stories and interacting with our volunteers these children are taking their first steps of faith, understanding that God is good and loving and that they are a part of a faith family.

Our preK and Kindergarten class has been making the most of our "First Look" curriculum. Children in these classes engage directly with scripture through stories, crafts and games to learn biblical characters, principles and to grow in their understanding of God's love and their place in The Body of Christ.

KIDchurch

In KIDchurch (Grades 1-6) we are utilizing a "one room schoolhouse" style of learning. This new approach has really made the most of our family culture at Bethesda. We aren't a big church, we aren't a flashy church, but we are a family of faith that cares for one another in good times and times of trouble. Our kids are constantly interacting with one another across grades to help each other to find scriptures, understand scripture and care for one another. Our curriculum is called 252 basics. The curriculum has given us a guide as kids learn overarching principles like: "I can trust God no matter what.", "I need to make the wise choice." And "I should treat others the way I want to be treated". We have learned and grown together in our understanding of how to grow in relationship with Jesus and one another.

Confirmation

Confirmation continues to be a vital step in the lives of our teenagers. We begin The Journey, our Covenant confirmation curriculum, in 7th grade. The two year program includes 104 days of private devotions, 50 meetings with their mentors and / or pastor, four camp experiences and two retreats. There are 26 key theological concepts, supported by scriptures, that make up the framework of our meetings with the students. Each student has a spiritual mentor chosen from the membership of the church. These mentors are same gender members who have displayed a maturity in faith and a desire to influence the next generation for The Kingdom of Christ. The depth of experience provided by mentors, pastors and the family of confirmands creates a program that impacts the lives of teenagers that will be the foundation of their faith as they move from children of the church to men and women who are disciples of Jesus. I want to give a special thanks to this years mentors and parents. Committing to the program for two years is a huge investment of time and energy and I trust that you have been blessed deeply for the investment you made.

bYG

This year we celebrate the ministry of City Life (YFC)! From small beginnings in our youth house just a few years ago they now reach hundreds of teenagers from across the city! BYG is now primarily focused on the high school and middle school students from our congregation and their friends. Our curriculum this year started by reading and discussing the sermon on the mount.

We looked at the principles that Jesus was teaching, their history, how they are misused, and how they are best used. We are finishing up this year with a study of the parables of Jesus. We also provide each student with a devotional and discuss how our daily prayer and bible reading is impacting our lives. In addition to our study of the scriptures we are learning life skills. Shopping, cooking, finances, baking, basic automotive maintenance, soldering, sewing, carpentry... If you have a skill that you think would be useful for teenagers to know, I'd love to talk about how we can include you in this practical ministry!

Young Adult Group

New in 2017 is our Young Adult small group. This college and career focused ministry is the low-key discipleship ministry that we have been praying for! 4-7 young adults come together in a comfortable living room setting and talk about the challenges of moving into the adult world and learning how their faith can empower that transition.

familyNIGHT

Family Night is once again well attended and enjoyed! We really do have something for everyone here at Bethesda. Classes for all ages meet to discuss relevant topics, pray and support one another. The children learned the Lord's prayer, even those who can't read yet were able to commit the word's that Jesus taught us to pray to memory. We spent months learning the meaning behind the words, the applications for children's lives and the beauty and simplicity of following Jesus. This school year we have begun the larger task of learning the Apostle's creed. This has, of course, been exceedingly fruitful already as the children have the chance to ask about and really understand some deeper concepts of faith.

Small Group for Parents

Our parent's of elementary students group has been very well attended and now even some from outside our congregation are joining in! Pastor Dan Heinz and his wife Natalie have been leading this group both in content and discussion. I'm thankful to them both for their leadership and devotion.

Adult Fellowship Group

Pastor Dave and Andy Stanley are working together to bring practical questions of the faith to our adult small group. This group has been meeting faithfully for years and we are so thankful for how welcoming they are to new faces on Family Night weeks.

Thank You Volunteers

And of course Family Night couldn't happen without the volunteers who give so many hours shopping, preparing, cooking, and cleaning. We appreciate all of our volunteers who teach, lead, pray, work and greet! We couldn't do it without you!

Thank you all for another year seeing the wonderful things God can do when we submit our plans to him! We look forward to another great year of doing ministry with a conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit! For your prayers, hours, and financial support we are deeply grateful. May God bless you richly beyond what you could ever hope or imagine in 2018.

Anthony Clerkin
Director of Christian Education

Leadership Team

It has been rewarding for me to be a member of the Leadership Team for the last four years. The Leadership Team members were Cheryl Waak, Dick Diller, Melanie Tack, Jeff Berg, Matt Carlson, Monica Michael, our staff members Dave Lindfors and Anthony Clerkin. Melanie Tack served as Secretary of the Leadership Team.

This year Paul Bengtson started a Prayer Service on the first Sunday of the month. He requested that Leadership approve him doing it more than once a month, Prayer services are held at 5:00pm on the first and third Sunday.

The Leadership Team also been working with other Ministry Teams to make changes. This year, we approved the following:

- Linda Parker started the Risk Management Team.
The team is Pat Casazza, Sharon Bullis, Paul Karvelius, Linda Parker, Judy Carlson.
Monica Michael was the liaison for the Leadership Team
- Motioned and approved the cost of Pastor Lindfors to attend the Gather '17 in Detroit, MI, to receive the "Lifetime Vocational Service Award"
- Missions Teams request to adopt two additional children in the Congo to help with fresh water in their village.
- Purchase handheld Wireless system for microphones
- Install exit signs in the nursery
- 4 additional smoke detectors for the church
- Approved payment for Pastor Dave to continue his Cohort sessions in Chicago for next year
- New commercial refrigerator for the kitchen

It has been a pleasure to serve as Chairman of this committee for the past year. I have appreciated all of your prayers and words of encouragement.

Blessings,

Cheryl Waak
Leadership Chairman

Leadership Team Organizational Structure for Bethesda

1) **Christian Education Team** support the Director of Christian Education (formerly the Director of Children's Ministries and the Director of Youth Ministries) in teaching Biblical truths and fostering discipleship to toddlers through adults. The team will also offer emotional and prayer support and will encourage supportive dialog to assist these various ministries.

Members of the Christian Education Team: the Director of Christian Ministry, Nursery, Toddlers, Children's Programming, Youth, Confirmation and Adult Sunday School programming.

2) **Congregational Ministries Team** will assist and support Bethesda ministries and groups that encourage the social, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of members and guests. The team will seek to create a climate of service by assisting members to identify and use their spiritual gifts, talents and passions to nurture others.

Members of the Congregational Ministries Team: Fireside Friends, Small Groups, Men's and Women's Bible Studies, Visitation, Hospitality, Mother's Group, Heart Prints and Integration and Participation Commissions.

3) **Missions and Compassion, Mercy & Justice Team** will support the collective missionary initiatives both local and international in scope. They will work with other team members offering input and suggestions so that the staff and congregation clearly understand the needs and opportunities for service.

Members of the Missions CMJ Team: Missionary Society, Women's Ministries, Nelson Elementary

4) **Trustees Team** will work with the Financial Official and the Leadership Team to insure that all financial matters along with the care of the building, grounds, and other church property are taken care of in a timely manner.

Members of the Trustee Team: Trustees, Financial Officer, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Generosity Team, Custodian

5) **Worship Planning Team** will work with the Senior Pastor and Staff to assist with planning services that are authentic, creative and participatory. Other important elements include special and congregational music, prayer and related components pertaining to the overall worship experience.

Members of the Worship Team: Creative Team, Service Planners, Communion Servers, Scripture Readers, Prayer Groups and Sunday Worship Team.

6) **Nominating/Human Resources Team** will ensure the congregation has a working plan for discovering, inviting, nominating and supporting persons for leadership positions essential to the ministries of the church. Responsibilities will include periodic training to ensure that people are equipped for and supported in their positions.

Members of the Nominating/Human Resources Team: Senior Pastor, Nominating Committee, lay members with HR expertise.

7) **Evangelism Outreach Team** will ensure that the congregation reaches out to people with the good news of Jesus Christ and receives them into its care, so that these persons may develop a personal relation- ship with God and live as Christian disciples.

Members of the Evangelism Outreach Team: Connections and Outreach Commissions.

Pastoral Search Team

As part of the Pastoral Search process, we have been sharing how God has shone Himself in the days since we had met last. We shared the good works at St. James, prayer for a recently released prisoner M. Young and sharing the Good News in the jails. This practice helps get us centered on the Lord's work before the meeting.

The committee wanted to let the congregation know how important this mission is to them. Many of us have generational ties to Bethesda Covenant Church; my family personally goes back 4 generations and I know that many go back further than that. We take a very personal approach to the life of OUR church and please know that we have our Bethesda families best interests in mind when we meet.

We met with Peter Sjoblom of the Covenant Central Conference and discussed the process. Mike West has put together a flow chart to get us started on the process and we are moving forward with that. We are looking into the Bethesda Covenant's profile at the Central Conference to see what it says about us and what potential candidates will see when they review it. After that, we hope to put together a job description and make a recommendation to the Leadership Team about an interim pastor.

We have received a few notes regarding the desires of the congregation in a future pastor. Please keep them coming and speak openly and honestly to anyone on the team; we welcome all comments.

Once again, please pray for this whole process and transition. Please pray for Dave, Jan and their family and lift up our future pastor in prayer as well.

Have a blessed and joyful Merry Christmas!!

Don Ramboldt
Pastoral Search Co-Chair



Adult Drop-In Sunday School

Matthew 28:19-20 , Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The purpose of the Adult Drop-In Sunday School class is to provide an opportunity to connect with a mid-size group, foster a sense of belonging and mutual care, create a context for guided discussion of God’s Word, and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Throughout 2017 the Drop-In Sunday School class has covered a variety of topics such as: Multiple DVD Series from John Ortberg, Max Lucado, Judah Smith, and special series for Christmas and Easter.

If you have an interest in joining a small group and learning about God’s Word and how to apply it to your daily life, join us on Sunday mornings from 9:00-9:50 in the Fireplace Room downstairs.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm thank you to Linda Parker and Kevin Polky who share this teaching opportunity with me. Their commitment and love for teaching God’s Word is an inspiration to everyone who attends this Sunday school class.

Delinda Grindle – Coordinator of Adult Sunday School

Band of Brothers

The Band of Brothers continues to be a deeply committed small group of men who are seeking to make the truths of the Word of God actions in their daily lives. We are a group who are not as concerned about content as we are do the hard work of internalizing God’s love and reflecting that in being open to changing how we live. All men 18 and over are welcome!!

During this past Fall, we have been studying a book recommended to us by Pastor Dave. The title is “Jim & Casper Go To Church”. It is a true story of a Jesus follower and an atheist who commit to visiting a wide variety of church worship services over the course of a summer and honestly asking the question, “What about the total worship experience either connected or turned off the atheist. Would he be interested in returning? We in our Band of Brothers have challenged ourselves to also ask, “How does our Sunday worship service affect visitors...would a visitor or non-Jesus follower being attracted to return to Bethesda? How would you answer that question?

Congregational Ministries Team (CMT)

The CMT continued visiting older adults in the congregation and hosting suppers. We enjoyed each other and shared the love of Christ within our Bethesda family. The purpose of assigned lists organized by zip codes was to invite most members and friends in the church directory for a supper in our homes during 2015-2017. This was done.

Team members who visit older adults are: Judy & Randy Carlson, Anne & Jim Grindle (first part of 2017) Paul Stalter, David Wood, and me. Monica Michael attended as liaison from the LT and will be doing visits in 2018. The team meets about every 6-8 weeks for breakfast at Stockholm Inn for prayer, planning, and sharing. Team members visit their same people periodically and David Wood provides communion as desired.

We hosted suppers in our homes and two luncheons this fall at church. The luncheons were to discuss the four questions posed by the Vision and Goals Ad Hoc Committee. Meetings minutes were sent with a cover letter to officers of the Leadership Team, Search Team, and members of the Mutual Ministry Committee as input for their work.

Volunteer supper hosts / hostesses are: Cheryl & Paul Bengtson, Judy & Randy Carlson, Heather & Anthony Clerkin, Carol Folkerts, Anne and Jim Grindle, Wealtha & David Helland, David & Jan Lindfors, Monica Michael, and Marcia & Paul Stalter. Hosts / hostesses present at a recap meeting of in November said they contacted people on their assignment lists. There was no clear commitment to continuing hosting suppers as it has been done. It was suggested that new attendees be invited to supper. Another suggestion is that we host Sunday luncheons at church in 2018. Such luncheons could be for prayer and study of Bible passages about the church and discernment of what God is saying to us during this time of transition.

Praise God for all the wonderful ways we care for each other at Bethesda through visitation, meals together, Fireside Friends, Heart Prints etc. More volunteers are welcome so tell us how you can help. Please pray for direction for these ministries and share as God leads. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wealtha Helland, Chair and
Monica Michael, Leadership Team liaison

HeartPrints Ministry

HeartPrints is a ministry that leaves God's prints on the hearts of those in our church family, who need comfort or a caring touch, using the heart of those who want to serve God in leaving those prints

In the year 2017, HeartPrints Ministry delivered/mailed:

- Thinking of You Bags and Meals were provided to those recovering from surgery, an illness, or who experienced a death of a family member
- Baby baskets
- Cards/notes were sent to individuals

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following members of the HeartPrints Ministry Team, who are dedicated servants to Bethesda, and respond to the needs of many individuals with a heart of love, compassion and tender loving care. Individually each of these ladies has called, emailed, sent cards, and "touched" others whenever they know of a need ... they serve as their heart leads.

Judy Carlson, Donna Crews, Robin Fredrickson, Wealtha Helland, Doris Johnson, Linda Parker
Marcia Stalter, Joy Vee, and Nancy West

If you know someone needing a touch, call the church office or one of the individuals listed below:

Care Cards/Notes - To lift someone's day: Nancy West

Baby Baskets - Newborns: Joy Vee

Thinking of You Bags - Those recovering from surgery, illness or a death of a family member:

Donna Crews

Meals - for new moms & those recovering from surgery or an illness, and if a member has experienced a death: Doris Johnson/Judy Carlson

Respite Care - Visits to encourage and/or relieve the caregiver: Judy Carlson/Doris Johnson

Rides to Sunday Church Services: Delinda Grindle

Welcome Visitors: Linda Parker

If you have any questions, requests, or would be interested in being a part of this ministry team call:
Delinda Grindle (Chair of HeartPrints) 815-978-6037

Missions & Compassion, Mercy & Justice

Throughout 2017 the Missions & Compassion, Mercy & Justice Team (Missions Team) continued our outreach into our local community in several ways, as we do each year. We reached out to our neighborhood John Nelson School, to The Carpenter's Place, worked with One Body Collaborative (formerly Love INC), and also with the Salvation Army .

Tutors for Nelson School provide help with reading and math and more are needed. Our church membership participates by collecting school supplies in late summer and early fall to help those who cannot afford supplies. During the Christmas season our WARM HEARTS-WARM KIDS project has helped to provide coats, boots and/or tennis shoes based on teachers' recommendations. This year 53 warm winter jackets were provided to children. We continue to collect Box Tops for Education for the school which helps acquire needed items for classrooms and the school. The collection jar is in the Hospitality Room. Each year we also prepare a Luncheon for teachers and staff at the close of school to thank them for all they do for our neighborhood kids. It gives Bethesda an opportunity to get better acquainted and also to show our appreciation. The luncheon offers a time for all to get together for a meal, visit, socialize and take a deep breath—the year is done!

Our Missions Team provides a sign up sheet for those interested in volunteering to prepare and/or to serve a hot breakfast to Guests at The Carpenter's Place on the second Tuesday of each and every month from 8:45 to 10 am. The Carpenter's Place is a day time drop in shelter for the homeless. They serve breakfast and lunch for 25-45 guests along with case management (guidance and opportunities) for those who are willing to work on goals and get back on their feet. They also provide transitional housing and assist with employment for those that qualify.

Thanksgiving Meal Baskets were provided this year to four families within our church body. Bethesda also collects paper goods which assist the Paper Angel closets that help those in need through One Body Collaboratives. This year three days of bell-ringing were scheduled for volunteers-30 hours of ringing for the Salvation Army at our neighborhood Schnucks store on Charles Street.

Globally, Bethesda supports one boy and one girl through Covenant Kids Congo in partnership with World Vision-sponsoring children to help build sustainable communities. We do this by collecting a free-will offering the first Sunday of each month. Because of such a generous church body, Bethesda was able to send an additional check in the amount of \$5000 this year to help the children and help build sustainable communities. This amount was over and above the \$40 per child that we send each month. Praise God!!

Each year a Covenant Missionary Prayer Calendar is made available to our church members giving full information of families and individuals serving long and short term in our various mission fields. We invite you to use this prayer calendar as part of your devotional studies and become acquainted with our missionaries. Dave Wood & family served in Congo for many years,. Cathy Campobello serves in Colombia, and our own Lon Swanson serves in Nome, Alaska, along with James Ventress and family.

Missions Team members are Jim Campobello, Carol Folkerts, Don & Shirley Hacker, George Strombeck, Gene Swanson, Nancy West and Pastor Dave Wood.