



Dearest Bethany family,

We are writing with anticipation and eagerness! We have been working since our July annual meeting to begin to try to offer more transparency by starting a Council Corner in Bethany's E-news and now, want to update you with exciting news from our master planning and discernment process.

***"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:19***

The goal of this process is to determine how to best improve Bethany's physical building to provide a more effective space for spiritual formation for all of us, while creating a more inviting and inclusive environment to build community engagement with both our Bethany family and our Elkhorn/Western Douglas County neighbors.

### **Why do we need a master plan and why do we need to update our building?**

We have heard stories told by some of you about Bethany's very first church, the big move to 204<sup>th</sup> street, and with prayerful innovation, moving to our current location and since adding to it several times to continue to serve our community and others better. We are so grateful for those who have come before us to bring us to the place we all stand in now. In those years, we've added worship space, classrooms, a gym, air conditioning, space for youth, restrooms, audio/visual technology—the list goes on.

Such as our world, technology, and physical, emotional, and spiritual needs grow and change, so too does our environment in order to meet those needs. Our world is craving belonging, relationships, and community with one another. To provide the best experience and best environment to inspire others to follow Jesus, we feel the need to continue to grow, change and adapt some of the physical space here at Bethany. We are looking back with gratitude and ahead with anticipation of how we can continue to grow for the sake of the next generation of Bethany's people.

### **Meet the Discernment Task Force**

As part of this process, in partnership with Bethany's pastoral leadership and staff, the Master Planning committee, and Church Council, a smaller subset of members from these groups have come together to form the Discernment Task Force. The purpose of this task force is to lead the congregation through the discernment process to create unity and confirm what we believe to be God's plan for the future



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of Bethany to grow our spiritual formation and community engagement to feed our mission to inspire others to follow Jesus.

Your Discernment Task Force members are Pastor Jon Bustard, Barb Baumert, VP of Bethany's Church Council, Ashley Hickson, Secretary of Bethany's Church Council, Mark Tillwick, Bethany Church Council member, Erik Hoegemeyer, Bethany Church Council member, and Steve Knapp, Bethany member.

Over the next few months, this group will meet to provide additional communication to you, the congregation, and prepare for and lead the upcoming "Tell Me More" meetings (more on these below).

### **How did we get here and where are we going?**

We invite you to join us for worship on November 5, 12, and 19 at any of the mornings services at 8, 9 or 10:30am. Here we will tell the story of how we arrived at creating a master plan and discerned how to best utilize our space, why spiritual formation and community engagement are our two biggest strategic anchors, and where we see Bethany growing into the future. If you are unable to join us for worship on these Sundays, don't worry the sermon will be recorded for you to listen to at a later date.

### **Tell Me More—SAVE THE DATE!**

Following our November storytelling and vision casting sermons, we invite you to join us at any or all of the 'Tell Me More' meetings listed below. The goal of these meetings is to help us discern and confirm a plan for creating an environment that fuels spiritual formation and encourages inviting and inclusive gatherings for our Bethany family and Elkhorn/Western Douglas County community.

December 3, 2023, at 10:00 and 11:30am

December 6, 2023, at 7:30pm

December 10, 2023, at 10:00 and 11:30am

December 13, 2023, at 7:30pm

### **What can you do now?**

**Pray.** Your prayers and personal discernment about God's plan for Bethany is what is most important right now. We invite you to ask God to provide wisdom, counsel, and encouragement during this time as we come together to make decisions to further His kingdom here on Earth.



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### **What's next?**

We will continue to provide updates through the Bethany E-News newsletter, worship services, email, handouts, and social media as we continue this journey of discernment. More information about the sermons and Tell Me More meetings will be shared as we approach those dates.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the Discernment Task Force.

Yours in Christ,

Your Bethany Lutheran Church Discernment Task Force

*Barb Baumert, Ashley Hickson, Mark Tillwick, Erik Hoegemeyer, Steve Knapp  
and Pastor Jon Bustard*



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