CROSSROADS

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2025

from the pastor...

Years ago, I worked at a Marriott hotel in Manhattan. One morning, a week or so before Halloween, I was in the hotel lobby talking to Bill, one of the sales managers. Since Halloween was approaching, I asked what his son was going to be.

He said, "I don't know … Spiderman or The Hulk."

I was disappointed and blurted out my displeasure… "The Hulk?!"

"Well, what do you expect, Robert, he's a three-year old boy."

I returned to my work, thinking, When I was a three-year-old boy, I wanted to be Endora.

If you don't know, Endora was Samantha's flamboyant mother on the TV sitcom "Bewitched". I LOVED that show and was especially drawn to the character of Endora. She wore fabulous brightly colored outfits. Her hair was a vivid orangey red. She had magical powers. She was firmly comfortable with who she was and was never afraid to speak out. I remember one episode where she and some of her witch friends were preparing to protest an advertising agency's campaign that illustrated witches as old and ugly.

We are living in scary times. Our government, that is supposed to support the populace has been turning against the LGBTQ+ community. Most of this hatefulness springs from a conservative Christian viewpoint. Jesus' message of "Love wastefully, Live fully, be all that God created you to be" (*John Shelby Spong*) is being trampled upon by fear-based hate.

You may rightfully recoil from this hate-based vision of Christianity. I write this to you a few days before national Coming Out Day, October 11, with a challenge to come out as Jesus follower, a Christian who embraces all the ways God's image shines from each of us. I promise you that the power of God's love is stronger than anything Endora whipped up on TV.

Blessings, Pastor Rob

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COMING SOON

Nov 7	Ring Out Danger
Nov 9	Bagged Lunches
Dec 5	Labyrinth Service

The Gift of Giving

by Julie Freeman

I really like to give presents to people I love. They have brought so much happiness to my life, and I want to give them some happiness. Sometimes I pick something I know they need; sometimes, it's something frivolous that I hope will brighten their day. Their happy expression when they discover the gift I have chosen gives me joy.

I also feel joy in giving to Bethany because the church has enriched my life in so many ways. I used to enjoy putting my offering in the basket each week during offering time; now I fulfill my pledge with one check each year. The reason is the same—to help ensure that Bethany has the funds it needs to continue its operations and programs. I also find that cooking with others at Bethany is rewarding, not only because we are preparing food for hungry people but also because I get to cook with other members of the Bethany community and feel more connected to them.

On **October 12**, we at Bethany will begin the season of considering how we can support Bethany's mission of personal transformation, a stronger faith community, and social justice. How can we contribute our time and financial resources? Each week, for five weeks, we will hear from a member of our community about what Bethany has given to them. By **November 9,** we will be asked to consider our commitment to Bethany for the coming year.

As members of the Bethany community, we have been abundantly blessed. I hope we can all experience the joy of giving this fall.

You can make pledges electronically at this web address:
https://bethanysf.breezechms.com/form/12544d99961037
or by using the QR code below.

BUDGET UPDATE

by Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Through September, we received $84,650 in donations and $132,182 in rental income for a total of $216,832. Donations for the year are running behind budget. Our expenses through September were $205,948. However, we have only made $1,408 in repairs versus the annual repair budget of $25,640. We have also increased our Reserves by $1,500.

Also included below is giving information. The distribution of pledges is shown below. Overall, our total average pledge amount is $5,932 per person. Total donations through September have been $84,650 across 46 people (for both pledgers and non-pledging donors) which results in an average gift of $1,840 person.

Our available cash on September 30th was $123,074.

Thank you for your support of Bethany.

Summary of Donations

Budgeted Giving for 2025 ==> $137,270

Actual Giving thru 9/30/25 ==> $84,650

Left to Go ==>$52,620

Actual vs. Budget	Actuals thru 9/30/25	Budget for 2025	Actual vs. Budget
Donations	$ 84,650	$ 137,270	$ (52,620)
Rent	132,182	169,797	(37,615)
Total Income	216,832	307,067	(90,235)
Staff & Programs	96,733	139,417	(42,684)
Tithe	19,000	30,707	(11,707)
Building Costs	88,807	117,774	(28,967)
Building Repairs	1,408	25,640	(24,232)
Total Operating Costs	205,948	313,538	(107,590)
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Increase to Reserves	(1,500)	(6,000)	4,500
Net Result	**$ 9,384**	**$ (12,471)**	**$ 21,855**

Cash Balances at 9/30/25	
Operating Cash	$ 123,074
Trustee Cash Reserves	$ 41,715
Memorials	$ 11,746

Distribution of Pledges			
Gift Amount	Number of Households	Pledge Amount	%
$1 to $2,500	9	$ 12,744	11%
$2,501 to $6,000	4	$ 18,400	16%
$6,001 to $9,999	3	$ 23,500	20%
$10,000 & Above	4	$ 64,000	54%
Total	20	$ 118,644	100%
Average/person		$ 5,932	

YTD Donations Received		
YTD pledges received	$ 73,599	87%
YTD other donations	$ 11,051	13%
Total donations	$ 84,650	100%
Total number of givers	46	
Average gift/giver	$ 1,840	

PHOTO GALLERY

A PEEK AT RECENT ACTIVITIES IN THE BETHANY COMMUNITY!

SOUND BATH

On September 20th, we had 15 people attending our **3rd Sound Bath**—including several people from the neighborhood community. It was a meaningful experience coming together to breathe, relax, and heal.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY PASTOR ROB!

Happy Birthday Pastor Rob!
We celebrated Pastor Rob's birthday – officially on September 26th.

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PHOTO GALLERY

CAFÉ BETHANY & FAITH IN ACTION

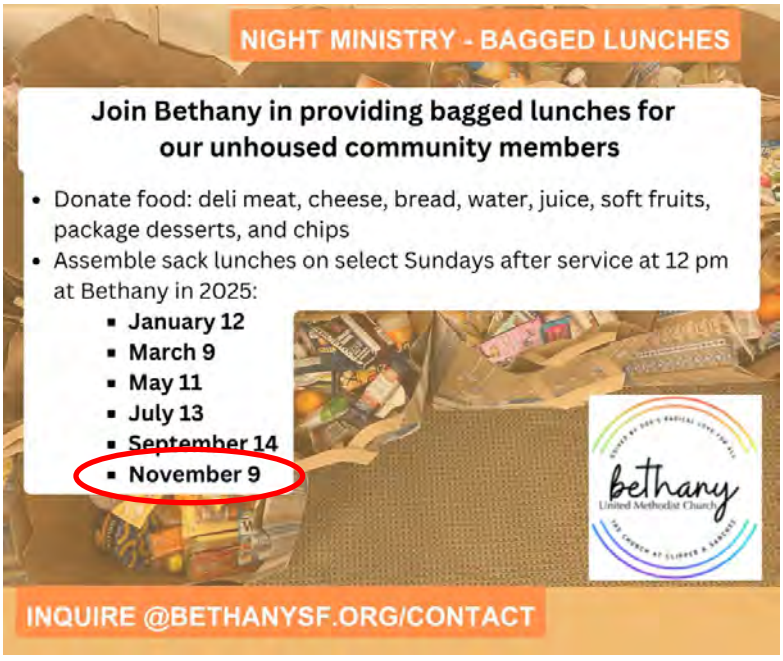
On September 21st, we held another Café Bethany. Pancakes and bacon were served! Matt Alexander from Faith in Action's San Francisco chapter spoke about their work in supporting migrant families. We learned about the experiences of families who chose San Francisco as their destination because they heard it was a sanctuary city. Many thanks to everyone that helped out!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Open Studio Art Exhibit by Bob Armstrong – Bob will be opening his Art studio at the Hunters Point Shipyard on **Saturday October 18 and Sunday 19th from 11 AM to 6 PM**. Bob will be showing his newest carved paintings, and there will be over 130 artists also showing their artwork for Open Studios. There will be free parking, food trucks, live music, and lots of great artwork to see. Please have a look!

Bob's website is:
https://www.bobarmstrongart.com/carvings.html
Directions and more information at:
https://www.shipyardartists.com/shipyard-open-studios/

Nov. 7th @ 9:30 am, every 1st Friday of the month, we ring our bells in solidarity with ***Ring Out Danger: People of Faith Opposed to Gun Violence*** (**https://ringoutdanger.org**). Please join us, in front of Bethany, no ringing experience is required.



Bagged Lunches, Sunday, Nov. 9th @Noon:
We will continue with our sack lunch ministry with SF Night Ministry. Six times a year we create 125 sack lunches for our unhoused neighbors in San Francisco.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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Join us for a service of music and movement, Friday, Dec 5th at 7 pm.

Each first Friday of the even numbered months will be an evening of chants and contemplative music inspired by the world's spiritual traditions. You are invited to explore the deeply centering tradition of walking the labyrinth, a journey inward and then back out. The service is very casual and is designed to be whatever you make of it. We will play music for about an hour.

Bible Study

Wednesdays 3-4pm on zoom. Join to discuss the scripture for the coming Sunday. All are welcome. Email Marilyn for more info mherand@sbcglobal.net

Small Groups – Sign-up at bethanysf.org

Group options: -2nd Saturdays each month @ 8:30am -2nd Wednesdays each month @ 7pm

CONTACT US

If you have articles, photos or announcements that you would like to share, please contact us!

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Find us online at **www.bethanysf.org**
FB **@bethanyumcsf** and IG **@bethany_umc_sf**

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

2: Bob Armstrong
3: Sean O'Conner
7: Julie Freeman
9: Jeff Friant
17: Angela Brown
22: Shannon Horton
23: Tim Friant-Nelson
24: Walter Thoma