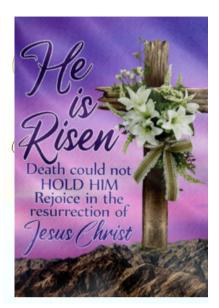


MARCH 2024

WWW.BETHELEMC.ORG / 403-337-2355 / CARSTAIRS, AB (MOUNTAIN VIEW COUNTY)









Just as Advent helps prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus, during Lent we think about how much Jesus gave up for us on the cross and prepares us for the celebration of the resurrection at Easter.

Lent began on February 14 and runs through until March 28. Back in February Children's Ministry emailed out a Daily Lent Activity Booklet containing short daily readings to enjoy as a family. They only take 10 minutes of your day and helps everyone to focus on Jesus and talk about things that matter to you as you live your life as his friend.

If you missed receiving this emai - let us know! We would be happy to email the booklet to you again, or hardcopies can be found in the fover! - Children's Ministry



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP
10:30am
All are Welcome!

CONTACT US!

Bethel Church Office (Krysta)
Tuesday, Wed (am) & Thursday
office@bethelemc.org
403-337-2355

Pastor Kelly Sikstrom pastorkelly@bethelemc.org

Pastor Chris Neufeld pastorchris@bethelemc.org

Childrens Ministries (Natalie)
Tuesdays & Thursdays
childrensministry@bethelemc.org

Finance (Karen)
Tuesdays
finance@bethelemc.org

EVENTS CALENDAR

To view the most up to date "Calendar of Events"



Bethel's Monthly Calendar

BETHEL SENIORS' PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

BETHEL SENIORS' PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

Wednesday March 27th, 2:30 - 4:00 at the Church

We'll focus on a time of prayer, singing, fellowship and refreshments.

More details to come in the weeks ahead!

For any questions, contact John Silcox, Bruce Lynn or Neil Carleton.



LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

Let's talk about money. I've been reading an excellent book by Sharon Hodde Miller called, *Control: Why We Crave It, the Anxiety it Gives Us, and Real Power God Promises.* One of the chapters in this book is on our relationship with money and the false sense of control that finances can give.

Why should we talk about money? Because Jesus did. Jesus spoke about money frequently. For Him, money was a discipleship issue – your relationship with money provides a window into your heart and soul. The entire Bible is full of wise counsel and direct warnings about money. Money is a key topic in the pages of Scripture.

- 'If your wealth increases, don't make it the center of your life.' (Psalm 62:10)
- 'Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle.' (Proverbs 23:4-5)
- 'Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.' (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
- 'Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness!' (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

This last Scripture passage points out the temptation to put our hope and trust in money... and the false belief that more money will bring more happiness.

Now, just to be clear, the desire for 'enough' money is different than the desire for 'more' money. The Bible repeatedly shows us God's heart to care and provide for those who are lacking and in need. A desire for 'enough' money is not selfish or greedy. It is ok and good to ask God to provide enough money for food, bills, rent/ mortgage, gas in the vehicle, monthly expenses, and simple treats to enjoy with your family. We live in a fallen and broken world, and the struggle for so many people to simply have enough is a clear display of this.

Most of the warnings about money in the Scriptures are not for those who have very little, they are for those who already have more than they need – and they keep pursuing after more and more. It can be hard for us to perceive this reality in our own lives. It is difficult to see and acknowledge the ways we look to money for security, stability, and identity; which might explain why Jesus spoke about it so much. He wants us to see something that is hard for us to see on our own.

Pastor Kelly's message continued ...

The truth is that the more money we have, the more attached we become to it; it takes more discipline to tithe, to be generous, to give to others. The more money we have, the more we will put our trust in it, instead of trusting in God – this is human nature. Money constantly aims to seduce and capture our hearts. The Bible warns that money can become our master, wealth can become our god, and our bank account can consume our affections.

Money in itself is not sinful or wrong. You can be a Godly person and also be wealthy (globally speaking, most of us would be considered wealthy). Money is neutral on its own – it's what we do with it and the place it holds in our lives that can become a problem. We can even use our money for good things, while still allowing it to have a place of control and mastery over us.

When it comes to money, the primary instruction of Scripture (and the teachings of Jesus), is to practice radical generosity with what you have – 'Give, and it will be given to you!' (Luke 6:38). Generosity is the greatest antidote to the unavoidable temptation of allowing money to become your master, your god, and the source of your trust.

Generosity is not only for the benefit and good of others – <u>it is beneficial and good FOR YOU!</u> Generosity sets us free from the empty promises and lies of money. It guards our hearts from making an idol out of money. It delivers us from the pursuit and obsession with money that consumes our world. And – generosity is a beautiful reflection of the heart of God.

God can be described as GENEROUS. He is generous in love, in grace, in blessings, in power, in hope, in wisdom, and in truth. He doesn't hold anything back from us – not even, His only begotten Son, who He generously provided as a substitute payment for the penalty of our sin. The generosity of God has transformed and shaped our lives. He was generous in creating this world for us, giving us life, providing healthy minds and bodies, blessing us with 'good and perfect gifts,' and removing the barrier of sin that kept us separated from Him. He is a generous God – and He wants us to be generous too.

Since the beginning of our marriage, Coralie and I have given our tithe and offering to God as a 'first-fruit' of each month: before we pay bills, or buy groceries, or pay for kid's activities. This is a test of faith at times, but a commitment we have made. We are committed to avoiding unnecessary debt and living within our means. We do our best to save for bigger expenses and family holiday times. We try to be open-handed with what God has given to us, and be ready to give to the needs of others we are aware of.

At Bethel Church, we are blessed by the generosity of many who faithfully give to the ministry of the church. We have practical expenses to care for, and there are many ways we want to see every dollar given be used for God's purposes and glory. It is all from Him, for Him, and to Him. A long time ago, I remember hearing someone say: We don't give equal financial offerings to the church, but we give God equal worship and thanksgiving, as we place our trust in Him.

A prayer of confession (written by Sharon Hodde Miller):

Jesus, you know me better than I know myself. You know my heart, and you know all the secret idols tucked away in the shadows of my soul. Because you know this, you have warned me – and everyone you love – to be wary of wealth. You know how it swallows up our focus and our dreams. You know how easily we trust in it, instead of you, and you know what this does to our lives. I confess that I have not always believed you – not really – when you have cautioned me about this spiritual peril. I confess that my income has influenced my contentment and that I have sought a sense of control through finances. Convict me of the vanity of this idolatry and help me to trust you truly. Amen.



UNSTOPPABLE WITNESS – ACTS 4:13-22

~ "...we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." ~

Over the past few weeks, we've been exploring and encouraging our youth toward four spiritual habits which we are to make part of the "rhythm" of our life: spending time with God, using your gifts, sharing your story, and spending time with others. At the time of writing this, we had just talked about the third spiritual habit, that is, sharing your story. You know, it's fairly cut and dry to make a habit of spending time with God, spending time with others, and in many cases using gifts. But sharing my story? Have I made that a habit? Should I?

Let's talk about what 'sharing your story' means scripturally first. At the beginning of Acts, Jesus tells his disciples, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." I think that word 'witness' is a good place to start, especially because Jesus seemed quite clear with the disciples that He wanted them to continue to be witnesses until the whole world knew about Jesus. So, we can easily infer that the disciples were commanded to make sharing their story a habit. But as we know, the whole world doesn't know who Jesus is and so the legacy of the disciples is passed to all of us who have been called according to the purposes of God.

So, if this precedent of sharing our stories as a habit is passed to us from the disciples, how might we find encouragement to make it a habit and rhythm in our lives? Perhaps let's look to Peter and John who had these audacious words for the religious leaders trying to stop them from speaking about Jesus, "[W]e cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." Indeed, this habit of witnessing to Jesus was so formulated in their lives that it was unstoppable!

If you read the passage starting at verse 13, you might take note of a few observations:

- 1) They were bold. Take heed of God's words given over and over again in scripture that for those who are doing the will of the Father, He is with them. Take courage! God is with you as you bear witness about Him. So don't stay silent, speak about what God has done. Even if it seems like the person or group of people you are sharing your life with don't want to hear it remember that God's Spirit is with you. You can be sure that He can and will do what he desires to do through your faithfulness to speak. If you are struggling to be bold, consider the fact that right after this trial with the religious leaders experienced by Peter and John, the Church's one request of God was to "speak [His] word with all boldness (v.29)." Do the same! Pray that God will grant you boldness as well!
- 2) They were uneducated and ordinary. It surprised the religious leaders a great deal that these two men who were 'nothing special' were speaking with such conviction and care about the Scriptures. But in God's economy and among those who know the way God's Spirit works, there should be no surprise. And yet, when it comes to sharing our stories, we often consider ourselves and our stories to be 'nothing special'. So many of us think we have nothing to share because we're not pastors or ministry professionals or Bible scholars, or because our lives have had no great conversion stories to tell. Perhaps we feel our witness is weak because of these things. And you know, maybe that's a good thing because I don't think I need to tell you what God can do in our weakness! Simply sharing how God has revealed himself in the small things, simply sharing a word from scripture that impacted you for the day, simply sharing the places in your life where you are struggling but believing God will see you through, these initiatives can have greater impact than you will know because God is faithful. No story about Jesus is 'ordinary'!

Pastor Chris's message continued ...

- 3) They were recognized as those who had been with Jesus. Though the religious leaders had likely physically seen these disciples with Jesus, I think we can read this also that Jesus had rubbed off on Peter and John. They were seeing similarities between these discipes and Jesus Himself. Let us be careful with our witness. Do we look like those who had been with Jesus? Has Jesus rubbed off on us? It may be good to ask some trusted friends or even family, "Do you see Jesus in me?" If so, what you say about Jesus will come with the great impact of a life that matches up. If not, even then we are not exempt. Because our witness can come in our vulnerability. When our witness is one of confession and humility, where we can admit to and open up our lives to the correction that needs to take place in our lives, such a witness should not stay silent. This is witnessing to what is true (confession) and how God's word works in our lives (through humility).
- 4) They spoke what they had seen and heard. Peter and John were called to be witnesses of Jesus, not salesmen of Jesus products. What I mean is that what they spoke was to come from their lives, what God had made known to them. Their witness was a part of them and so everything they spoke was from their heart, something that they experienced, something they knew intimately because Jesus' story had become their story. Sharing our story must come with a vulnerability. If we throw Bible passages and principles that we've never witnessed taking shape in our lives at others, we are not really being witnesses, are we? But be encouraged by this! You don't need to have everything figured out to be a witness. You don't have to have answers to every question. You can just share what God has made known to you.

You are called to be Jesus' witnesses wherever you go. Testimony is not a one-time thing you do at a baptism; it's ongoing! You're not done being Jesus' witness until He tells you. So, keep sharing your story by telling what you have seen God do and what you have listened to from His Word. Be an unstoppable witness!

Pastor Chris Neufeld

BYG News



BYG SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 6:30pm - BYG NIGHT
SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 12:30pm - BYG SENIOR HIGH
FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 6:30pm - BYG NIGHT
WED., MARCH 13, 4:30pm - BYG JAM REHEARSAL
FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 6:30pm - BYG NIGHT
SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 4:30pm - BYG JAM Lead Worship
FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 6:30pm - BYG NIGHT
SATURDAY, MARCH 23 - YOUTH EVENT @ DIDSBURY

QUESTIONS?

Email Pastor Chris at: pastorchris@bethelemc.org Call: 403-337-2355 or text: 403-796-8890 during office hours.



BETHEL EMC WEBSITE

- Sundays Livestream Link
- Sermon Archives
- Calendar of Events
- Ministries
- Giving Information
- Weekly Bulletins
- Resources & Schedules

www.bethelemc.org

Want to give a financial donation to Bethel Ministry?

OFFERING BOX:

Located at the back of the sanctuary are 2 locked boxes. Place your cheque or cash in an offering envelope and drop it into one of the boxes. Our ushers collect donations at the end of each service.

MAIL CHEQUES TO:

BethelEMC

Box 4, Site 11, RR 2

Carstairs AB, TOMONO

E-TRANSFER:

Send to finance@bethelemc.org , no security question needed.

If it is your first time giving please ensure your address is emailed to our finance team to ensure you receive your charitable tax receipt.

**All giving will go to the general fund unless designated otherwise.

Facility Bookings



We are incredibly blessed that Bethel Church is such a beautiful and functional facility for us to use day to day! The facility is used for many different functions and events throughout the week (bible studies, special events, meetings, small groups, worship, concerts, private bookings, youth, etc). If you would like to reserve a specific room or date to use the facility, please contact Krysta at the Church Office via email or phone. We do need to check to make sure that the date/time and area that you would like to use is available - to prevent any overlap or double bookings. As well, there is a "Facilities Use Form" that must be completed for all private bookings. Thank you so much, we appreciate your cooperation!



Mark your calendars and join us!



Missions News

Get to Know the Elias' Ministry + Home on Wheels Fundraiser!

Kevin and Kim Elias, along with their posse of boys, have been actively involved in an itinerant music ministry among the First Nation people throughout B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba over this past year. This has been a growing part of their lives for many years and God continues to impress upon their hearts the need for engagement with these dear people through the gifts He has given them. Bethel Church is grateful to join with them in this ministry. On their extended trips across western Canada, with their growing family and an assortment of instruments, their aging motorhome has been limping along, causing more and more reason for concern."

We would like to invite each and every one of you to partner together, as a family of believers, to help the Elias family to have the funds needed to purchase a 'new to them' motorhome for their ministry trips.

Join us for a fun, family friendly evening to hear the Eliases' story and their vision for ministry among the First Nations people of Canada. The evening will include a free supper, great music, a silent auction, treats for the kids, and a LIVE dessert auction to wrap up the evening.

Saturday evening, March 16th at Bethel Church! Doors open at 5:00 p.m. and Supper starts at 5:30 p.m.

- All donations must be given directly to Kevin & Kim Elias, and will be put directly towards their motorhome purchase.
- Bethel Church cannot issue a tax receipt for any donations given.



Right Now Media

RightNow Media is a free online video resource available to our entire church body.
You can find small group bible study material, video devotionals, leadership conferences, and much more!



Contact the Bethel office to receive your invitation to get started!

How does it work?
We send you the invitation via email, and all you have to do is accept the invitation and then you're good to set up your personal account and preferences!

Rivers Edge Camp





2024 SUMMER CAMPING SEASON Registration Open.

https://riversedgecamp.org/summer-camps/ See the website for prices.

Sunday School News



EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday (March 31) we will be celebrating together in the church service. Activity boxes will be available for children (preschool—grade 6). Parents are welcome to use the nursery however no volunteers will be scheduled. Parents must remain with their children in the nursery.



HE IS RISEN!

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERING UPDATE!



We are so excited to be able to support our local missionaries, **the Elias Family**, with your Sunday school offering until June 2024. With every \$1 brought in, we will add **COLOR** to our motorhome. As of February 20th we have collected over \$250!

Thank you for your generous giving and support.

3rd ANNUAL BETHEL FAMILY





PATE CHANGE: SUNDAY APRIL 7TH

Join us after the church service for a hotdog lunch and a family scavenger hunt.

More details to come!

PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE May 26 to 1

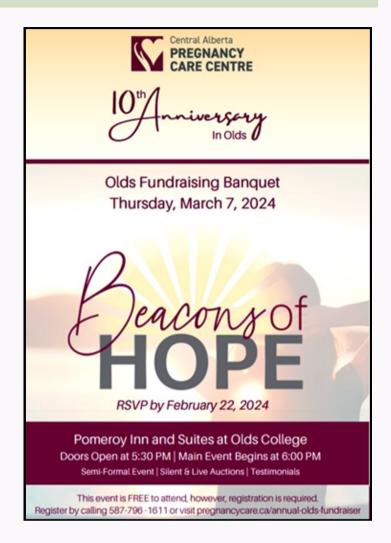
iviay 26 to June 23

If you have an upcoming preschooler (2.5-3yrs) who will be joining our preschool class in the fall, you are welcome to come and join our preschool Sunday school class.

Parents are welcome to stay.

Upcoming Events

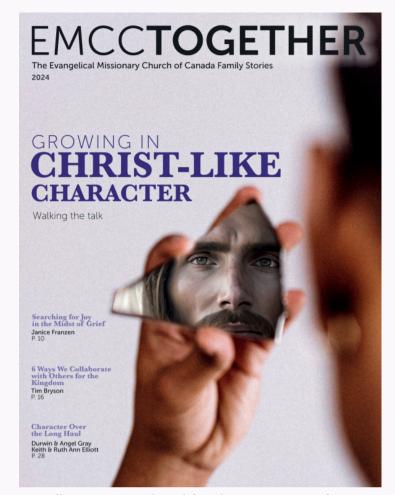












Visitors & Newcomers

WELCOME TO BETHEL CHURCH!

Are you new to Bethel, just visiting, or new to the community? Here are a few Bethel areas that may be of interest and information for you!

Children's SUNDAY SCHOOL ... if you would like more information on our Childrens Sunday School classes, please let us know! Natalie Killam heads up our Children's Ministry and she'd love to chat with you!



There are "VISITOR CARDS" in the pockets of the sanctuary chairs. Please feel free to fill one out when you're at the church and place it in the VISITOR BOX (on the foyer table). We'd love to know more about you!

There are also teal colored "VISITOR FOLDERS" on the front table in the foyer. Please help yourself to one! The folder is filled with information about Bethel, to help you get to know us!

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP time follows every service in the café area! Feel free to wander over to the area (East side), and enjoy a cup of coffee and a time of fellowship with new faces!

If you are a new, regular attender to Bethel and would like to be included on Bethel's "Prayer and Information" email list; the Congregation Phone List; Right Now Media; and have a mailbox in the foyer — please let Krysta at the Church Office know, and she would be happy to arrange all of that for you!

Womens Ministry

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OF PRAYER

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada is inviting women from all different churches to attend the International Women's Day of Prayer. This is an interdenominational gathering that has gathered women from 150 countries together to pray, for relevant issues that affect women and children.

The local event will be held at the United Church of Carstairs on Friday, March 1st at 1:30.

The service typically lasts approximately one hour, and followed with refreshments. The organizers are looking for any ladies interested in doing a liturgical reading/prayer (prepared for you), and would also like to have a general sense of numbers for preparing the food afterwards.

If you are interested in attending or helping with a reading, please RSVP as soon as possible to Rachel Reid at 403-312-9360.

More information can be found at:

https://wicc.org/world-day-of-prayer/what-is-wdp/



LADIES BIBLE STUDY "Seek First the Kingdom"

REMAINING SESSION DATES:
February 29, March 14, 21, 28, April 11, 18.

Although no childcare is available, please feel free to bring your children. Questions? Please speak with Janice F. or Rachel R.

'OVERFLOWING' ALBERTA WOMENS CONFERENCE

Kathy Morales, our guest speaker from Ladies Retreat 2023 and Team Leader of the Canadian National Baptist Convention (CNBC) has invited the women of Bethel to attend Overflowing, a women's conference intended to inspire, encourage, and equip women to overflow with Jesus in their personal circles of influence.

This one-day conference will feature dynamic keynote speakers, engaging breakout sessions, worship,

lunch, and time to connect with other women of the faith.

We'll dive deep into discovering what it means to live a life overflowing.

The conference is taking place on April 27 in Red Deer at Home Church.

More details and tickets can be found at:

https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/overflowing-alberta-tickets-776393603167?

aff=oddtdtcreator

Or use the QR code provided on the invitation (to the right).

Early Bird price of \$35 ends March 4!



Womens Ministry







er save the date so

CONTACT RACHEL REID IF YOU CAN HELP OUT MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK! 403-312-9360

BETHEL LADIES' RETREAT

@ RIVERS EDGE RETREAT CENTRE
NOVEMBER 8-10, 2024

fellowship, fun, encouragement, growth Crest